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RUTH CHEW

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Also by Ruth Chew

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WITCH’S CAT
THE WITCH’S GARDEN

RUTH CHEW

THREE ADVENTURE TALES

Illustrated by the Author

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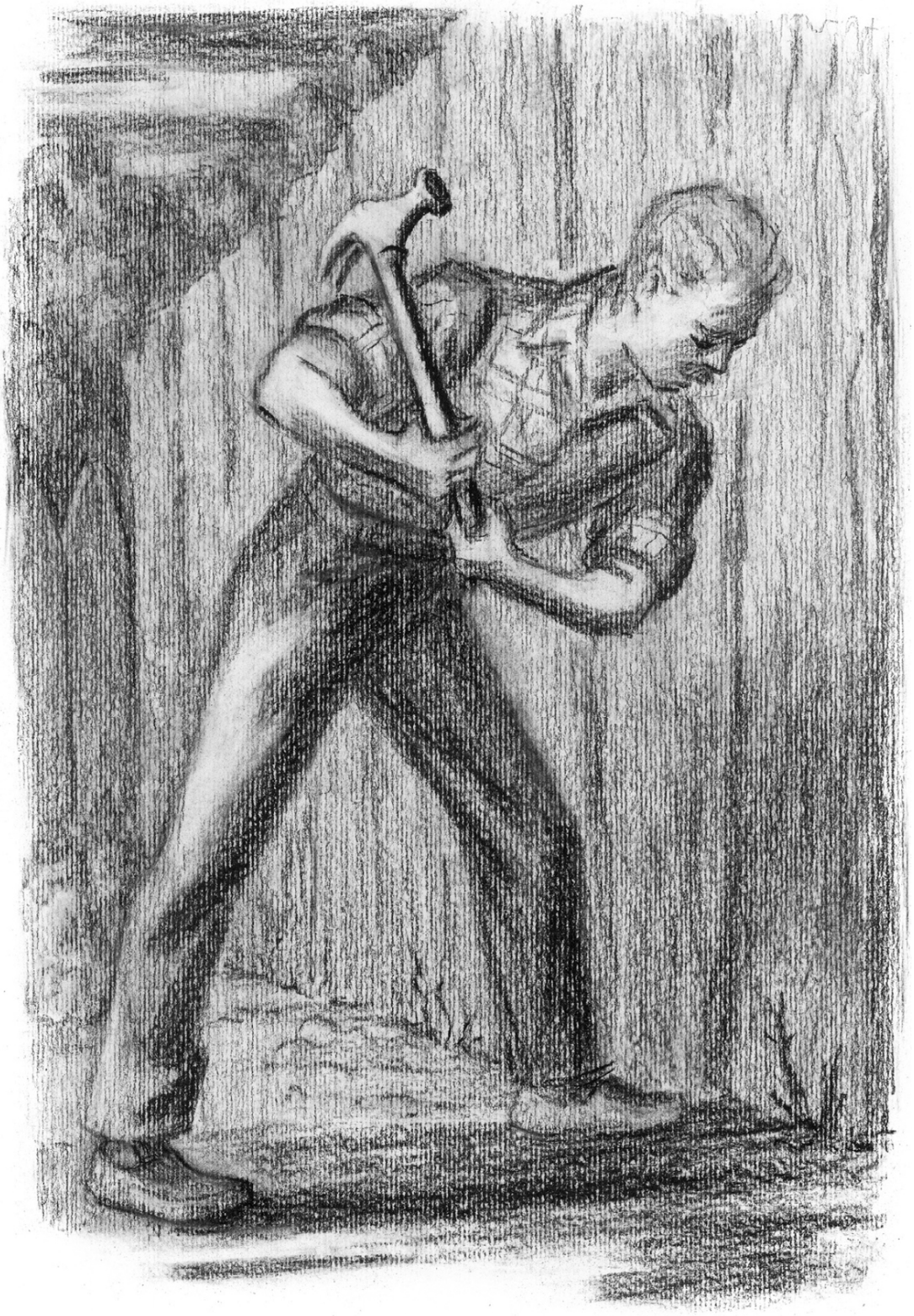
About the Author

RUTH CHEW

LAST CHANCE FOR MAGIC



“Out of the way, everybody!” Mr. Robertson yelled. “This fence is coming down!”

Terry and her brother, Max, jumped back. Their mother was behind them. She pulled both of them even farther from the tall old fence.

The Robertsons had moved into the house last week. Like many houses in Brooklyn, this one was joined in a row with others. The houses looked alike, and each had a backyard with a fence around it.

There was a row of the same kind of houses on the other side of the block.

Yesterday, when their father left the stepladder in the front yard, Max and Terry took turns climbing it to look over the back fence.

They saw there was a vacant lot between the two rows of houses. All sorts of trees and bushes crowded next to each other in the lot. A tangled vine with thick stalks and floppy leaves covered the ground and climbed the trees.

“It looks like a jungle in the movies,” Terry said.

Max found a loose board in the fence. “We could pry this off and slip through to explore the jungle.”

Terry thought this was a great idea, but they never had a chance to try it.

And now Mr. Robertson was starting to hit the rotten wood at the bottom of the fence with a big hammer. Some of the old boards broke and fell into the yard.

“Look, Dad. A mountain of dirt is piled up behind the fence!” Max said.

“Not just dirt. Here’s something that looks like part of an older fence. And what’s this?” His father dragged out a set of broken slats nailed

together.

“Maybe it was a trellis,” Mrs. Robertson said.

“What’s a trellis, Mom?” Terry asked.

“That’s a frame for roses to climb on,” her mother told her.

“Dad,” Max said, “how many different fences do you think have been built here?”

Mr. Robertson picked up a shovel and dug out a pile of dirt, a rusty pipe, and part of a red brick. “Probably a great many, Max. No fence could last long with all this junk pushing against it. I’m going to build a wall.”

“That will take much more work than putting up a fence, George,” Mrs. Robertson reminded her husband.

“There’s a new type of wall built of stones made to fit together,” Mr. Robertson said. “You don’t have to use cement, and it’s the best type of wall to hold back dirt. I’m going to go over to that building supply place on Fifteenth Avenue and order the stone. Do you want to come and choose the color?”

“Oh, Dad,” Max begged. “May I come, too?”

“No, Max,” his father answered. “You and Terry would be begging me to buy everything in the store. Your mom and I will do better alone. Come along, Betty.” He put down the shovel and walked to the back door of the house.

“We won’t be long,” Mrs. Robertson told the children. She rushed after her husband.

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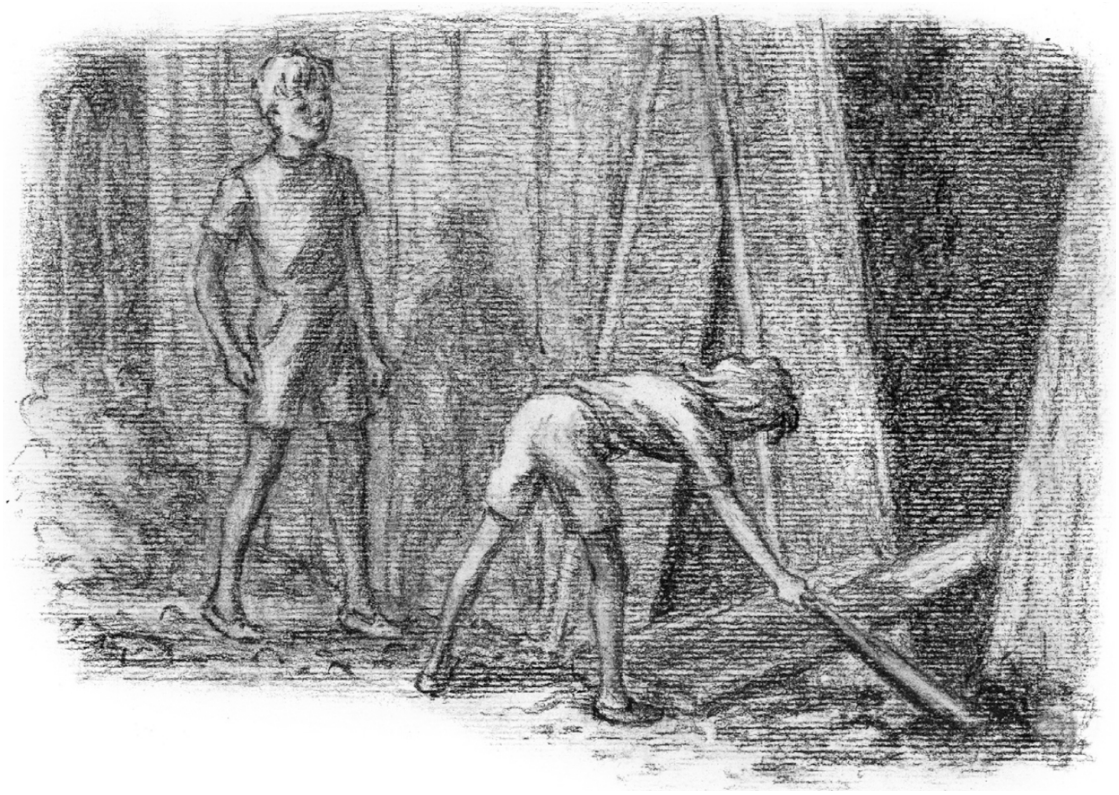


Terry picked up a broken slat and scraped at the dirt coming through the break Mr. Robertson had made in the fence. “Dad’s going to build a stone wall. Now we’ll never be able to go exploring.”

Max nodded. “I know.”

Terry jammed the slat into the dirt and twisted it. “We should have gone through the fence yesterday when you found one of the boards was loose.”

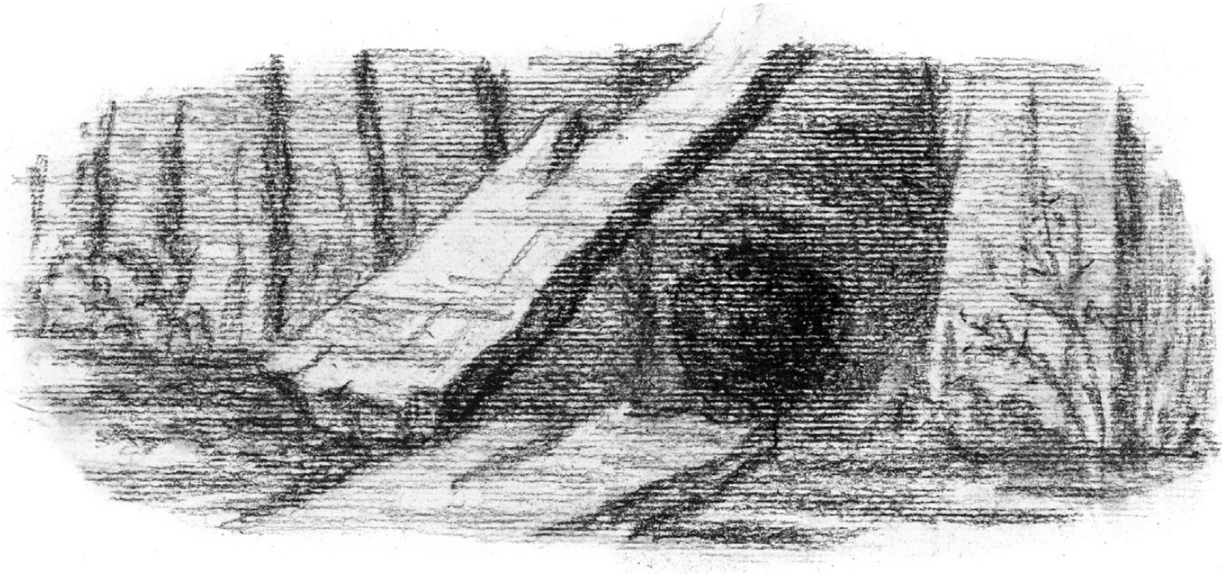
“Don’t be silly, Terry,” her brother said. “We’re lucky we didn’t pry the board off the fence. We’d have all this junk blocking our way on the other

side. We couldn’t get through the fence and we’d have a job nailing the board back.”

Terry picked up the shovel. She began to dig at the dirt through the broken fence. “Maybe we can make a tunnel. This stuff doesn’t seem too hard.”

Max pointed at the dirt. “Put down the shovel, Terry,” he whispered.

Terry couldn’t believe her eyes. The dirt she had been digging was moving all by itself. It twirled round and round and started to become a kind of funnel going sideways through the fence.



As it whirled, the hole in the middle of the dirt became larger. The whirling whistled like a wind now.

Then, suddenly, the whirling stopped and all was quiet. There was a little tunnel going through the ground behind the fence.

Terry looked at her brother.

“Are you scared?” he asked.

“No, but I don’t know why I’m not scared,” Terry told him. “This is magic, isn’t it?”

Max nodded. “It’s funny. I thought I’d stopped believing in magic, but I sure believe in it now.”

“Then, what are we waiting for?” Terry got down on her hands and knees and started to crawl through the tunnel.

Max followed his sister. “I guess you’re right, Terry. After all, this may be our last chance to see what’s on the other side of the fence.”

The tunnel was just big enough for the children to crawl through. It was damp and cool under the ground. They could see a faint light somewhere in front of them. It seemed close, but they had to crawl for quite a while before they reached the end of the tunnel.

Terry scrambled out onto soft damp weeds. She stood up and stretched. Then she bent over to grab her brother’s hand and pull him out of the tunnel.

Max turned to look back at it. “Terry, it’s gone!”

The ground was as green and weedy as if there had never been a tunnel there.

3

“I’m not sure how we’re going to get back into our yard again,” Max said.

Terry looked around. “The tunnel seems to have taken us into the middle of the jungle. There are so many trees here that I can’t see any of the houses.”

“Well, we wanted to explore. We’d better get started.” Max walked toward a clump of tall flat grass and fuzzy brown cattails.

Terry followed him. The ground under her feet felt soft and spongy. She saw Max reach the cattails, then try to step back. He lost his balance, slid into the tall grass, and disappeared.

“Watch out, Terry,” he yelled. “There’s water here!”

Terry had to push the cattails aside to see her brother.

Max had slid down a slippery bank and was standing ankle-deep in a clear running stream.

“It’s perfect for wading,” he said, “but I’d better get my sneakers off.”

Terry lay flat on the ground. She held on to the cattail stems with one hand and took hold of Max’s hand with the other.

He climbed back up the bank and sat down to take off his sneakers. Terry hurried to take hers off, too. It was August, and they were both wearing shorts.

Terry left her sneakers beside the cattails. “I won’t have to bother with them while I’m wading.”

Max put his wet sneakers on a flat rock. Then they both stepped into the shallow stream. Water striders played on the surface. The water was deeper in the middle of the stream. They heard a splash.

Terry pointed. “Look, Max!”

A fish leaped up after a water strider.

“Too bad I didn’t bring my drop-line,” Max said.

The stream wound along. Enormous trees lined the mossy banks. A kingfisher swooped down from an overhanging branch and snatched fish from the water.

They were wading downstream. The water was higher than Terry’s knees now. Something brushed against her legs. “Max, I’m caught on something! I can’t walk.”

Max waded over to her. “It’s some kind of net. We’d better go back.” He pulled the web of cords away from Terry’s legs.

They started wading back upstream. Terry kept looking for the clump of cattails where she had left her shoes. There were more cattails than she remembered, but none of them were next to her sneakers.

At last, Max said, “There are the skid marks I made in the bank. This is the place, Terry.”

“It’s the place, all right,” Terry whispered. “But look over by that tree. Someone has picked up my shoes!”

4

Someone was standing in the shadow of an enormous pine tree holding Terry's bright red sneakers and staring at them.

Max took his sneakers off the rock and began to put them on.

Terry ran barefoot over to the tree. As she came closer to it, she saw that the person with her sneakers was a very young woman. She was saying, "Pretty! Pretty!" and was so busy admiring the sneakers that she didn't notice Terry.

"I think they're pretty, too," Terry said. "But my mom doesn't like them." When the woman caught sight of Terry, her mouth fell open, and her dark eyes opened wide. She even seemed afraid to move.

"Please, may I have my sneakers?" Terry took them from the woman and bent down to put them on her feet.

"Oh, they're moccasins!" the woman said. She wasn't afraid now.

When Max walked over to join them, the woman looked from one to the other. "You are both washed-out looking!" she said. "I was afraid you were spirits. Now I see that you are Lenape but not Leni-Lenape. Is it some kind of sickness that makes the color fade from your hair and skin?"

Neither Max nor Terry knew what to say. Max had blue eyes and blond hair. Terry's eyes were green. Her hair was light brown and wavy. They looked at the woman. Her skin was a dark rosy tan, and her hair, worn in two braids, was straight and black and shiny. She was neither fat nor thin. She wore a sleeveless blouse and a knee-length wraparound skirt with fringes at the bottom. Both her clothes and her shoes were made of soft leather.

“My name is Singing-Moon,” she said. “What’s yours?”
“I’m Max,” he said. “And this is my sister, Terry.”

A board dangled from one of the short bare branches on the lower part of the pine tree. Terry walked over to it. “Who is this?”

Max came over to look.

A baby in a leather pouch that laced up the front was strapped to the board.

A little roof over his head protected him from sun and wind. Tiny spinning objects dangled from the roof to keep the baby amused.

“That’s my little darling,” Singing-Moon told them.

“What’s his name?” Max asked.

“He’s not old enough yet to tell us what it is,” Singing-Moon said.

“Do all children in your family get a chance to choose their own names?” Max wanted to know.

Singing-Moon laughed. “Of course!”

“How do they pick them?” Terry asked.

“Something happens to them or they have a dream. Later on they can change their names. It is strange that you don’t know our ways,” Singing-Moon said. “You must have come from far away. Sit down and tell me about it.”

Singing-Moon sat on the mossy ground under the big pine tree.

Terry and Max sat facing her.

Max spoke first. “We wanted to see what was on the other side of the fence behind our house. There was so much dirt behind the fence that Terry decided to dig a tunnel through it.”

“What’s a tunnel?” Singing-Moon asked.

“A kind of long cave with an opening at each end,” Terry told her. “I started to dig and then the dirt swirled around and dug a magic tunnel all by itself. I crawled through and Max came after me.”

“But when I turned to look back at the tunnel, it was gone,” Max said.

Singing-Moon nodded. “Magic is like that. You never know what it will do. I will talk to my grandfather about it. He is the chief of our village and is very wise. Perhaps you should change your names. Would you like to be Cave-Crawler and Traveler-Through-Tunnels?”

“Maybe later, if that’s the only thing that will work,” Max said. “For now I’ll keep my old name.”

A wind was shaking the branches of the pine tree. A long thin pinecone tumbled into Terry’s lap. Singing-Moon picked it up and looked at it. “Just ripe.” She pulled a basket of braided grass from under a bush and began to search the ground under the tree for more pinecones.

Whenever a gust of wind came along, more cones rained down from above. Terry and Max joined Singing-Moon in gathering them.

When they had scooped up all the cones they could see, Singing-Moon took her baby off the tree and tied him to her back with a woven strap. The strap went around her forehead and left Singing-Moon’s arms free.

She started to pick up the basket of pinecones, but Terry stopped her. “I’ll carry that for you.”

Singing-Moon smiled. “Very good. I was hoping you would come home with me. Max should have some sort of spear or club in case we meet a bobcat or a bear.”

“I have something better.” Max pulled a slingshot from the back pocket of his shorts. He had made the slingshot himself and used it with spitballs for target practice in the basement at home.

He went to the stream for smooth round stones. Max was certain spitballs would not be the best things to use for shooting bears and bobcats.

Singing-Moon reached behind the pine tree and took out a wooden spear with a stone point. “I keep this near me all the time.”

She led Max and Terry to a narrow path. It was just wide enough for them to walk one behind the other. The trees grew close together on each side.

Singing-Moon walked without making a sound. Max and Terry tried to be just as quiet. They were careful not to rustle dry leaves or step on fallen twigs.

Still the forest was a very noisy place, full of the chirpings of many kinds of birds and insects.

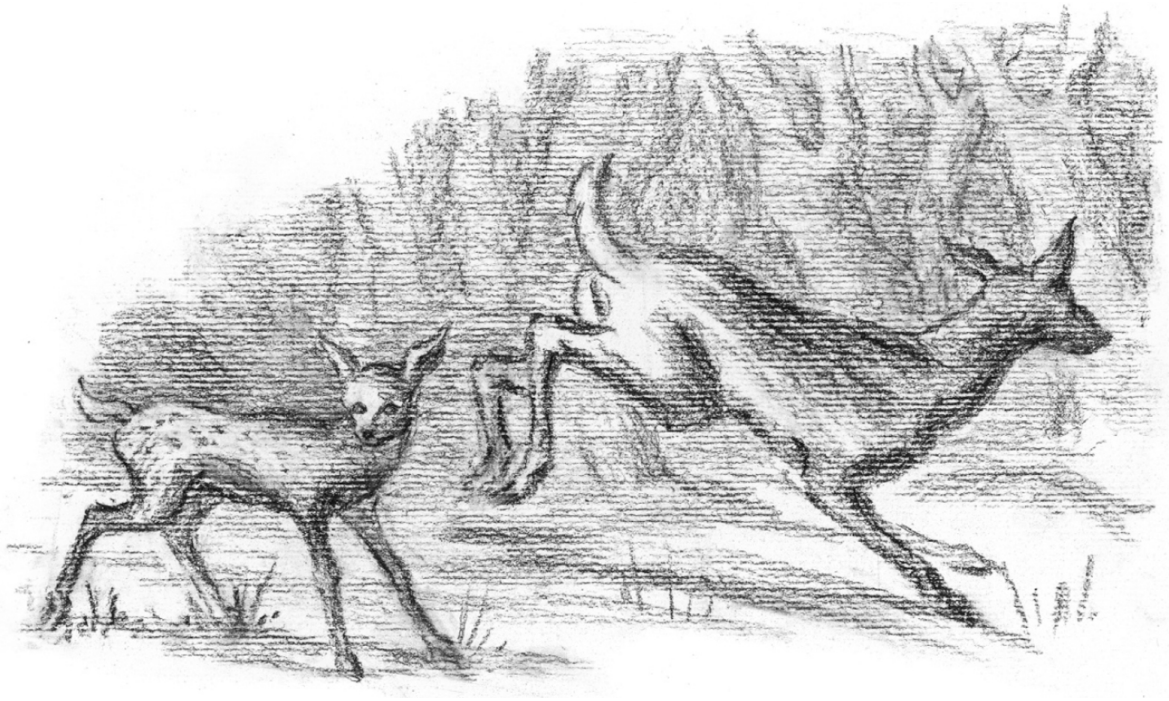
When they came to a little open space between the trees, they heard a rustling in the underbrush.

Singing-Moon stopped before she went into the clearing. She pointed her spear in the direction of the rustling sound.

Max fitted a stone into his slingshot.

Terry held tight to the basket and felt her heart thumping in her chest.

The rustling became louder. Suddenly a doe with a spotted fawn burst out of the bushes. They leaped across the little glade, bobbing their white tails, and disappeared into the forest.



Singing-Moon rested the wooden end of the spear on the ground for a few minutes before going on.

She must have been just as scared as I was, Terry said to herself.

The baby was fast asleep and missed all the excitement.

The path through the forest went in the same direction as the stream. After a while the trees became farther apart.

Max and Terry saw clearings where corn was growing. The cornstalks were planted three or four feet apart. Beans of many colors were growing up the cornstalks and using them for beanpoles. In between the rows of corn were squash, pumpkins, and watermelons.

Soon there were planting fields all along the stream.

Singing-Moon led them to a tall stockade fence. The gate was open.

“This is my village,” Singing-Moon said. “Come inside.”

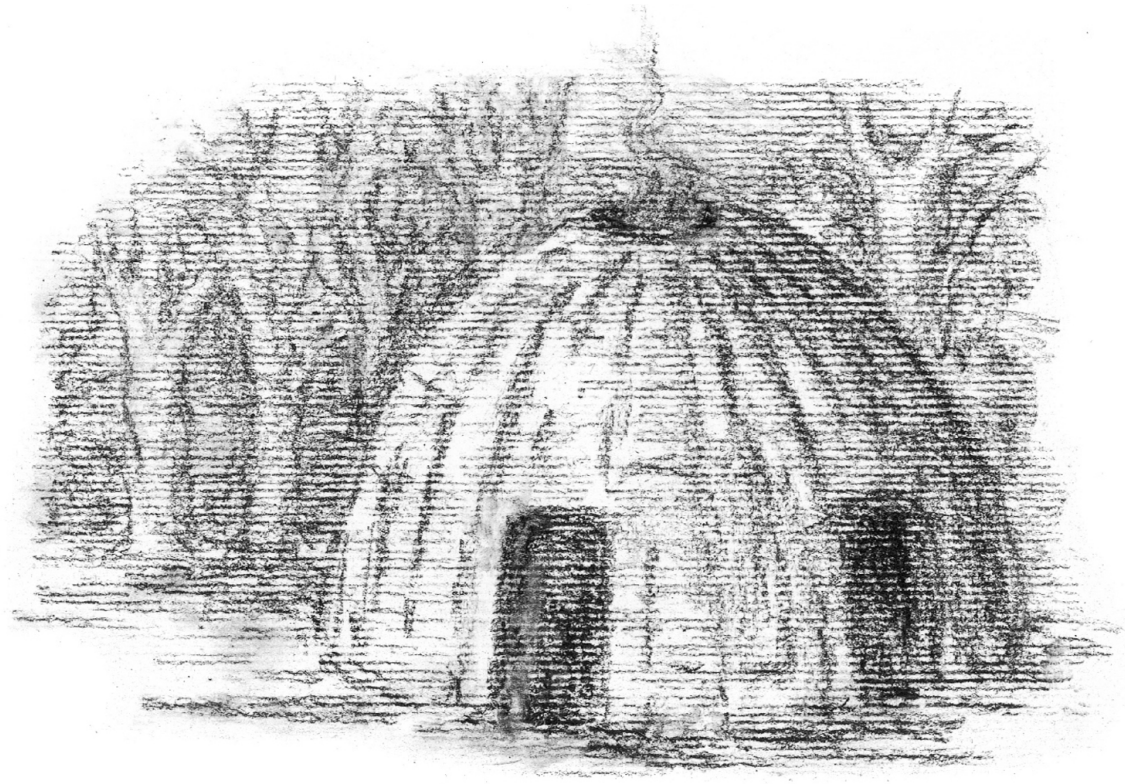
In the center of the village was an open space. A mound in it was higher than the rest of the ground.

There were about ten houses within the fence. Each house had been made from a circle of young trees tied together in a dome shape. The houses were covered with strips of birch bark, animal skins, or mats woven of cattail

reeds. Some were covered with all three. They had no windows, but each house had four doors and a hole in the roof to let the smoke out.

Singing-Moon led Terry and Max to the largest house. “I want you to meet Wise-Defender, our chief.”

7



The mats used to cover the four doorways were folded back. A gentle breeze blew through the house.

Singing-Moon stepped inside. Terry and Max followed her into the shadowy room.

A small smoky fire was burning in a circle of smoke-stained stones.

Strings of corn held together by braided husks were tied to a pole that went across the ceiling. Bunches of dried herbs, clumps of roots, and strips

of dried pumpkin also hung from the pole. They were all drying in the smoke from the fire.

Terry and Max heard the sound of gentle snoring. They looked around and saw a thin old man fast asleep on one of the low benches that went around walls.

Singing-Moon went over to him. She bent down and pressed her cheek against his hand.

The old man opened his eyes. When he saw Singing-Moon, he sat up and hugged her. The children saw that his white hair reached to his shoulders.

“I’m sorry I had to wake you, Grandfather,” Singing-Moon said.

“I’m glad you did. I was having a bad dream. I dreamed that the forest was gone from here, and so was the stream. Our people were gone, too.” He laughed. “I’m glad it was only a dream.”

“So am I, Grandfather,” Singing-Moon said. “I woke you because I want you to meet my friends and hear their strange story. This is Max, and this is Terry.” She turned to the children. “And this is our chief, Wise-Defender.”

The old man stood up and smiled. He held out both hands to each of them, and they gave him theirs in return.

He had such a kind face that Terry and Max liked him at once.

“I must go and feed my little darling,” Singing-Moon said to the children. “I’ll come back for you afterward.” She left the house with the baby on her back and her spear still in her hand.

Wise-Defender sat down on the bench again. The ground in front of him was covered with soft pine branches. Terry and Max decided to sit there so they could look at him while they talked.

“Start at the very beginning,” Wise-Defender said. “The more I learn about you, the better chance I’ll have of under-standing what happened.”

Together they told him as much as they remembered. “We only wanted to know what was behind our fence,” Max finished.

“I think you’re beginning to find out,” Wise-Defender told him.

When Singing-Moon returned, Wise-Defender lay down again on the bench and closed his eyes.

Terry and Max followed Singing-Moon out of the house to a much smaller one.

“Does your grandfather live all by himself?” Terry asked.

“Oh, no,” Singing-Moon told her. “Two of my aunts and their families live with him. Wise-Defender is very old and needs people to care for him. My husband and I built a house of our own. You must stay with us.”

A young man was standing in front of the little house, holding the baby in the air and dancing with him.

“This is my husband, Blackbird-on-the-Wing,” Singing-Moon said. “And these are our guests, Terry and Max,” she told him.

“Welcome,” the young man said. “Look at this!” He leaned over and let the baby’s tiny feet touch the ground. At once the baby straightened his legs and tried to stand. His father laughed and lifted his son into the air again. “Not yet, little man,” he said, “but you’ll get there!”

Blackbird-on-the-Wing had heard about the slingshot and wanted to see it. Max took it out of his pocket and showed him how the slingshot worked.

A fire burned in front of each house. People were cooking and eating there.

Singing-Moon was busy at her fire. Terry went to help her.

She saw a pile of clean smooth stones near the fire.

Singing-Moon kept taking stones from the pile and putting them into the fire. Terry copied her. She learned to use two sticks to pull the hot stones out of the fire and drop them into a large wooden bowl of water.

When the water in the wooden bowl began to boil, Singing-Moon used a stone knife to skin and cut up two rabbits Blackbird-on-the-Wing had

caught in his snares, and a large fish he'd speared, along with all sorts of roots and leafy wild plants. She dropped everything into the bowl and added several handfuls of cornmeal. Terry kept the water bubbling by putting in more hot stones.

"Do you always use wooden bowls?" Terry asked.

Singing-Moon showed her clay pots that were black from many fires. These had pointed bottoms, which had to be propped up by hot stones when they were in the fire.

The pinecones they had gathered were now on a slab of birch bark. They had started to open and drop their seeds onto the bark. Singing-Moon scooped up as many seeds as she could and dropped them into the bowl of boiling water. She stirred the mixture with a long wooden paddle.

The baby was asleep in his leather pouch on the board swinging from the maple tree next to the little house.

When the food in the wooden bowl was cooked, Blackbird-on-the-Wing sat on the ground beside it. “Are you hungry?”

The children nodded.

“Sit.” Singing-Moon handed each of them a large clamshell, gave one to her husband, and kept one for herself.

They sat near the big bowl and used the clamshells to scoop out the food. Terry and Max had never tasted anything quite like it. They enjoyed some of the things in the mixture more than others. Nobody told them what to eat or made them finish anything they didn’t like.

Terry and Max ate what they wanted and stopped when they’d had enough.

All the people in the village seemed to be out-of-doors in front of their houses. Some of them were eating. Some were making mats, stretching leather, carving wood, or doing other kinds of work.

Children were playing games. A girl not quite as tall as Max came over with a younger boy to meet Max and Terry. “We want you to be happy here,” the girl said. “Tomorrow we can show you a good place to go swimming.”

It was getting dark. The people went into their houses.

Terry looked up at a sky that was filled with more stars than she had ever seen in Brooklyn. “Look, Max!”

Max stared up at them. “Terry,” he whispered, “the stars are in exactly the same place in the sky that they are at home. It’s just that, without all the lights, we can see them better.”

“What does that mean?” Terry asked.

“It means we’re still in the same place, but I’ve a feeling we’re in a different time.”

“I’ve read about that in stories, but I never really believed it,” Terry said.

“It’s all part of the magic,” Max reminded her. “Singing-Moon seemed to think all we had to do was change our names to go home again. But I like it here, and I’m not ready to be called Traveler-Through-Tunnels.”

“Won’t Mom and Dad be looking for us?” Terry said.

Max thought about this. “We can’t do anything about it, Terry. We’ll just have to see what happens.”

Singing-Moon had taken her baby into the house. Now she came out to tell the children, “It’s not safe to be out at night. Come inside, and I’ll show you where you can sleep.”

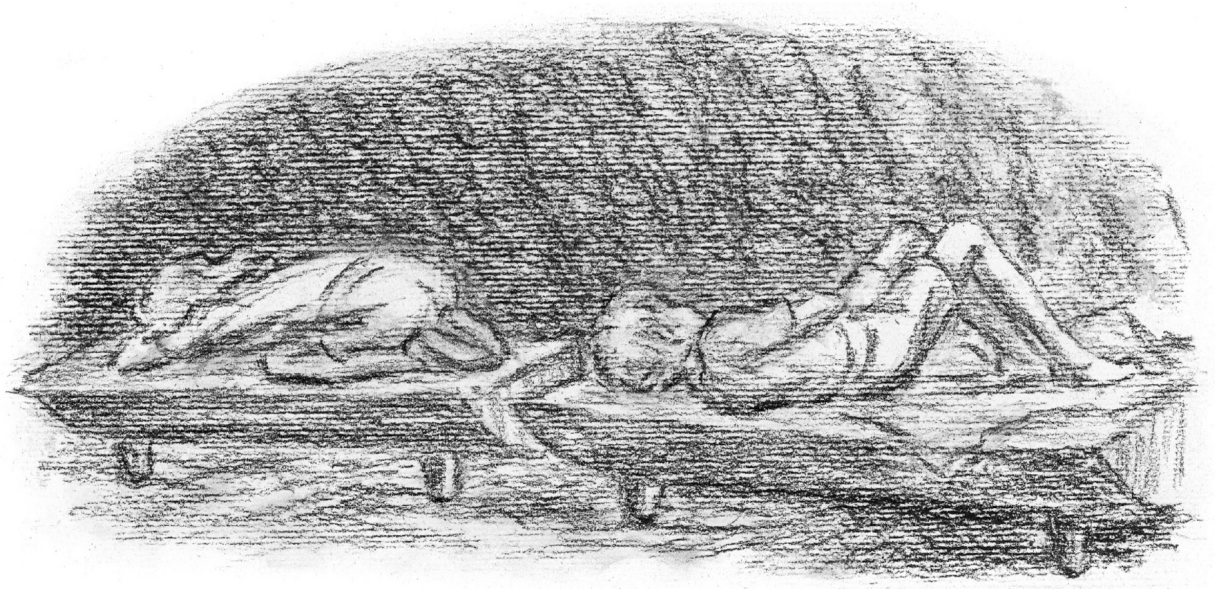
In the house a small fire glowed under drying herbs and corn.

Singing-Moon showed them where soft animal skins had been spread over the benches that went around the walls.

“Ow!” Max slapped his bare arm.

Singing-Moon gave him a clay pot of some sort of ointment. “This will keep mosquitoes away.”

Both Max and Terry rubbed the ointment on themselves. Then they curled up on the soft skins and fell asleep.



Singing-Moon woke the children in the morning. “Get up,” she said. “Snow-Flower and Like-a-Possum have come to take you to their swimming place.”

Terry sat up and looked around. For a minute she didn’t know where she was.

“Like-a-what?” Max asked.

“Like-a-Possum.” Singing-Moon laughed. “That’s the name he chose. You’re not the only one who thinks it’s funny. He and Snow-Flower are my cousin’s children.”

Terry stood up and stretched.

“The water in our stream is good to drink,” Singing-Moon told her. “There’s a flat rock next to the stream near the little willow trees.”

Terry went outside. “I’ll be ready soon,” she said to the two children who were waiting at the door.

Terry ran over to the stream. She kneeled on the flat rock, leaned over the water, and cupped her hands to get a drink. Then she splashed water on her face and combed her hair with her wet fingers.

Max came over to meet his sister. “If you want breakfast, you’d better eat something now,” he told her. “I was talking to Blackbird-on-the-Wing. These people don’t have regular mealtimes. They just eat when they’re hungry.” Max showed Terry a little bag of woven hemp. “He gave me this and said there’s something in it we can chew when we’re hungry and can’t find any nuts or berries. He takes a bag of this stuff when he goes hunting. He says he can’t do without it.”

Terry decided she’d better eat while she had a chance. She went back to the little house. Singing-Moon was sitting under the maple tree feeding her baby.

Snow-Flower had a fire burning and was heating stones in it. Terry joined her. Together they re-warmed the food in the wooden bowl. By the time it was ready, the baby was asleep in his little pouch on the board, swinging from the maple tree.

Blackbird-on-the-Wing and the two boys sat down by the bowl, along with Terry and Snow-Flower. Singing-Moon brought out six clamshells, and everybody scooped out what they wanted.

A little dog with pointed ears came over and sat down to watch them eat.

Terry and Max saw that Blackbird-on-the-Wing tossed the food he didn't want to the dog. So did Like-a-Possum and Snow-Flower. Max started to copy them, and then Terry did the same.

"Singing-Moon eats everything," Terry whispered to her brother.

"Just like Mom," he said.

When the meal was over, Singing-Moon showed Max and Terry how to wipe the clamshells clean with dried grass. Then she gave each of them a sack of strong hemp. “Carry this everywhere. You can put what you gather into it.”

Terry saw that both Snow-Flower and Like-a-Possum carried sacks. Snow-Flower also had a thick stick. Like-a-Possum held a short spear. They led the way through the village. Snow-Flower introduced Terry and Max to the people they met. Everybody seemed to be her aunt or uncle or cousin. They all stopped what they were doing to greet the visitors.

The four children left the village by an open gate in the stockade fence and began to walk side by side through the fields of corn and beans and squash that were planted along the stream.

“Why did you pick Like-a-Possum for your name?” Max wanted to know.

“One day I saw a possum sleeping in a tree,” the younger boy told him. “I left my spear under the tree and quietly climbed up to grab him.

“I put the possum in my sack and carried him down to the ground. When I took him out of the sack to kill him with my spear, he was stiff and didn’t move. I thought he’d been smothered. I put down the spear and used both hands to open the sack again and put the possum back into it. But that possum was up the tree before I knew what was happening.

“The possum had fooled me by pretending to be dead. I want to be clever like him. So I changed my name.”

“What was it before?” Max asked.

“Little-Cloud,” Like-a-Possum told him.

Max thought about this. “You were right to change it.”

They crossed the last planting field and began to follow the narrow path that led downstream.

The path led through the woods. Snow-Flower went first. Max came after her. Like-a-Possum followed him, and Terry was last.

They walked silently. When they came to a large oak tree, Like-a-Possum pointed to piles of acorns lying on the ground under it. “We’d better gather these to take home.”

“Why do you want them?” Terry asked.

“To make bread,” he told her.

Max looked at the acorns. “If we get them on our way home, we won’t have to carry them all day.”

“They might not be here later,” Snow-Flower said.

Suddenly Max saw something orange and brown and shiny among the acorns. It was long and thin and it was moving toward him. When it raised its head he saw that it was a copperhead snake.

He’d learned in Boy Scouts that copperheads are deadly!

12

Pow! A stone went flying from the slingshot in Max's hand. It struck the copperhead right in the teeth.

Snow-Flower banged the snake on the head with her club.

When the snake stopped moving, Like-a-Possum said, "He's dead now, Max. Put him in your sack. You can make a belt or a headband from his skin."

"You can have it," Max told him.

Like-a-Possum dropped the dead snake into his sack.

Terry walked over to her brother. “I don’t know how you did it, Max. I was too scared to move.”

Max looked at the slingshot. “I’m still scared, Terry. I’d forgotten all about the slingshot and was thinking about acorns. I don’t remember putting the stone in the slingshot.”

Terry bent down and started to pick up acorns and drop them into her sack. Max joined her, but he kept his slingshot handy.

When they’d collected all the acorns they could find, the four children continued along the narrow path. But now everybody kept looking for snakes.

The trees became farther apart. Soon the path was crossing a wide plain with only a single big tree in sight.

Snow-Flower ran over to a clump of scrubby bushes. She popped something into her mouth. “Yum!”

The others joined her in eating the ripe blueberries. These were much smaller than the ones Mrs. Robertson bought in the stores, but they tasted wonderful.

They ate all the blueberries they could find. Then Terry found a patch of blackberries. They were bigger and juicier than the blueberries, but the children had to watch out for thorns.

After everyone had eaten enough berries, they went back to the path leading across the plain.

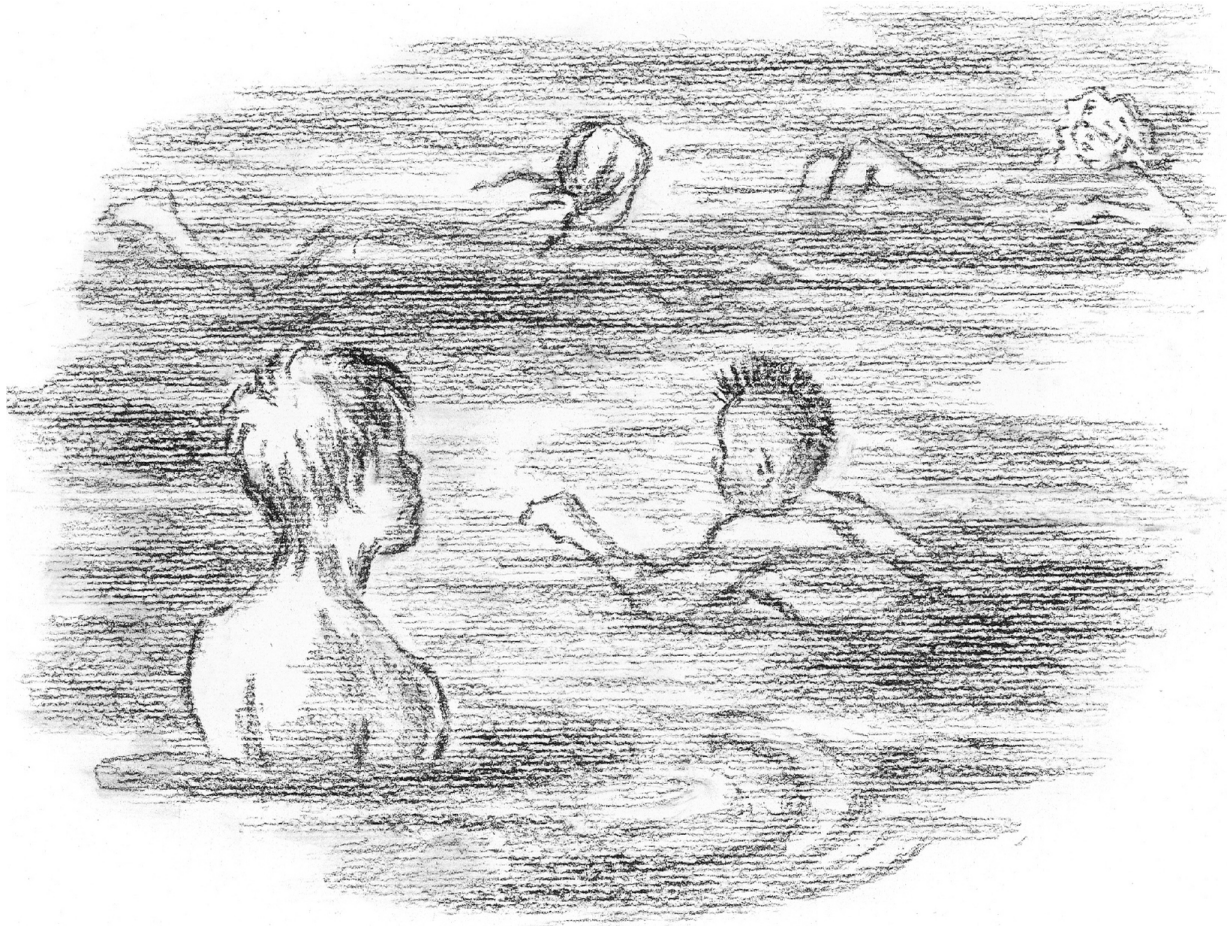
The sun was high in the sky now. It was warmer here than in the forest. Snow-Flower began to walk faster. She led the way to a large pond surrounded by reeds and cattails. “Here we are! This is the best place to swim.”

Terry and Max heard the sound of splashing and laughing voices. When they came to the shore of the pond, they saw groups of children playing in the clear water.

Snow-Flower and Like-a-Possum took off their moccasins. Terry and Max slipped out of their sneakers. They left them with the rest of their things on a bank overlooking the water.

“Last one in is a rotten pumpkin!” Like-a-Possum dashed toward the pond.

The others chased after him.



13

The pond was deep enough for them to swim, but not so deep that it was dangerous. Most of the children were good swimmers, but some were teaching themselves how to swim.

The smaller ones bobbed like corks in the water. The older ones swam like ducks, diving down and kicking their feet in the air.

Like-a-Possum wanted to race with Max, but Max won. He had longer arms and legs to push back the water.

Snow-Flower was good at swimming underwater.

“Show me how you do that,” Terry said. “I always seem to be up on top. You swim like a fish.”

Snow-Flower showed her how she swam. No matter how hard she tried to copy her, Terry still floated to the surface.

Snow-Flower watched her. “Terry, you don’t need to swim! I see you sitting in the water, turning around on your back or your stomach, and not sinking no matter what you do. If I stop swimming, I sink. I wish I could float like you.”

They raced each other across the pond. Snow-Flower kept swimming, but Terry would roll over to look at the sky and drift. Snow-Flower had reached the other side of the pond and was on the way back before Terry was near it.

While they were swimming, a few clouds began to gather. The sky became darker. A drop of rain fell on Terry’s nose.

“We’d better start for home!” Max yelled. He swam to shore.

The others were quick to follow him. As soon as they were ready, all four picked up their sacks. Like-a-Possum grabbed his spear. Snow-Flower held on to her club, and Max made sure his slingshot was ready. Terry was glad she didn’t have a weapon. She didn’t want to have to kill anything.

They left the pond and started back across the open plain. The rain was coming down harder, and the sky was almost black.

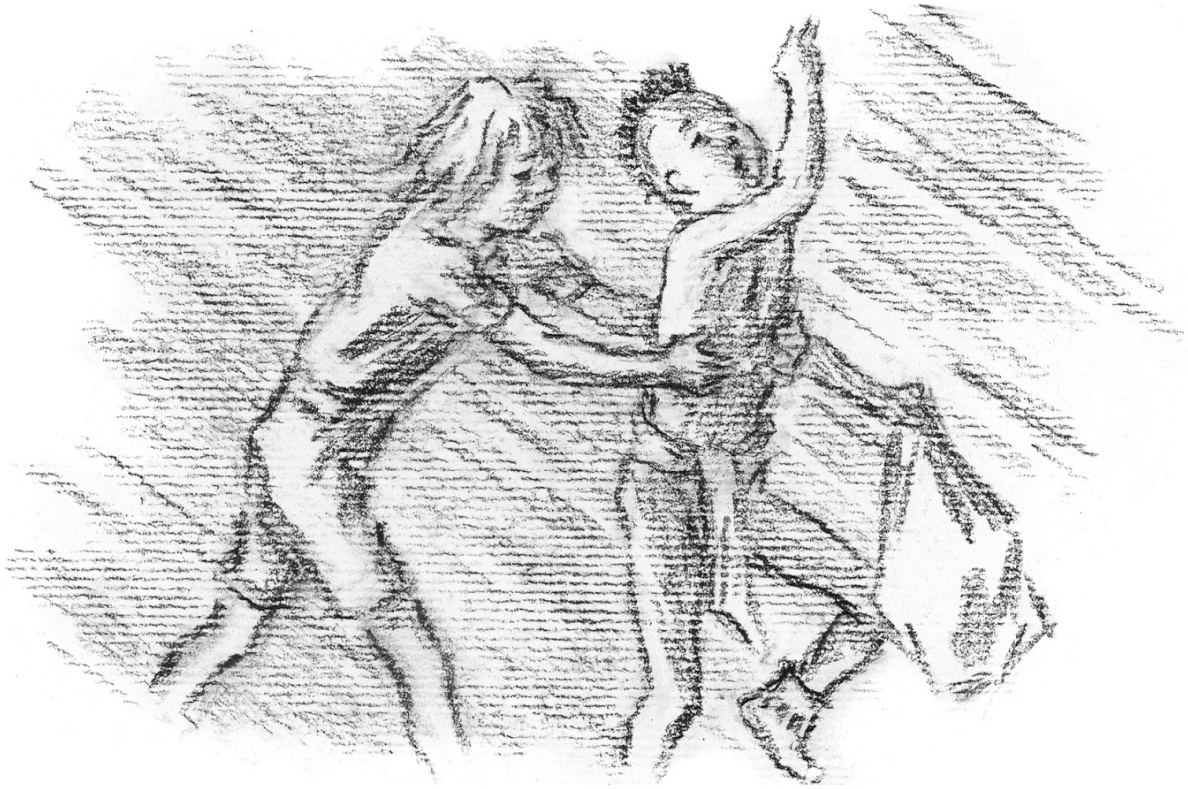
Terry saw a flash of lightning in a cloud. A moment later they all heard the rumble of thunder.

They passed the blackberry patches and the blueberry bushes. The rain was coming down in torrents now.

Up ahead towered a lonely tree.

“Just what we need!” Like-a-Possum ran over to take shelter under the spreading branches.

Terry threw down her sack. She raced over to drag him back into the pouring rain.



“What’s the matter with you?” Like-a-Possum struggled to get away from her.

Suddenly there was a blinding light and a deafening boom. A fork of lightning had split the trunk of the tree in half!

Nobody said anything for a while. Then Terry picked up her sack. “Didn’t anybody ever warn you guys not to stand under a tree in the rain?”

14

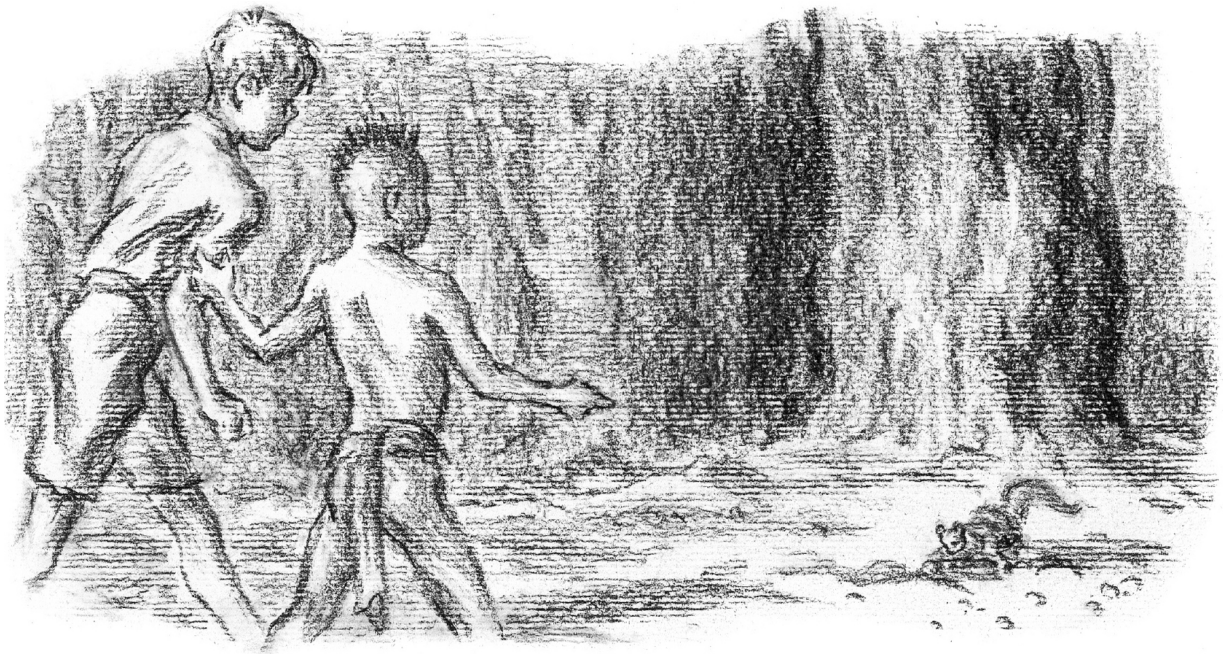
Snow-Flower led the way through the pouring rain. Max noticed that there were places where the narrow path became two paths. It would be easy to lose their way. He was glad they had Snow-Flower for a guide.

The thunder rumbled away into the distant clouds. The sky became lighter. Before they reached the forest, the rain stopped, and the sun came out.

“I’m glad,” Like-a-Possum said. “I wasn’t going to walk under all those trees while it was still raining.”

Water dripped from the trees at first. Farther along, the woods were dry. When they came to the oak tree, they saw more acorns. A gray squirrel was busy burying some of them.

Like-a-Possum grabbed Max’s arm and silently pointed first to the slingshot and then to the squirrel.



Max shook his head.

The squirrel saw him, flicked his tail, and scampered up the tree.

Like-a-Possum was disappointed. “You could have shot him easily, Max. Why didn’t you?”

Max used to feed peanuts to squirrels. He couldn’t hurt one.

“The slingshot is magic,” Terry said. “It only does what it wants to.”

Nobody argued about this. And nobody wanted to pick up more acorns. They left them for the squirrel and walked quickly along the path.

Terry began to feel empty inside. “Those berries were good,” she said, “but they didn’t fill me up.”

Max took out the little bag Blackbird-on-the-Wing had given him. “I’m hungry, too. How about you guys?”

Snow-Flower and Like-a-Possum each took a handful of dry cornmeal out of the bag and began to chew it.

Terry grabbed a handful and popped it into her mouth. It was so dry she thought she would choke, but she kept chewing until the cornmeal became moist. Then it began to taste good. Soon it was soft enough to eat. Terry’s stomach felt much better. She looked at Max. He was still chewing. And he looked surprised.

It was a long walk through the woods. The sky was turning pink by the time they reached the stockade fence around the village.

Singing-Moon and her grandfather were waiting at the gate. Her baby was on Singing-Moon's back.

"Run home!" Wise-Defender told Snow-Flower and Like-a-Possum. "Your mother is waiting for you."

They raced off to their own house.

Singing-Moon was surprised that the children were so wet. It had not rained here.

Wise-Defender led the way to Singing-Moon's house. He went to sit near her cooking fire. "Come over here and dry those damp clothes," he told Terry and Max.

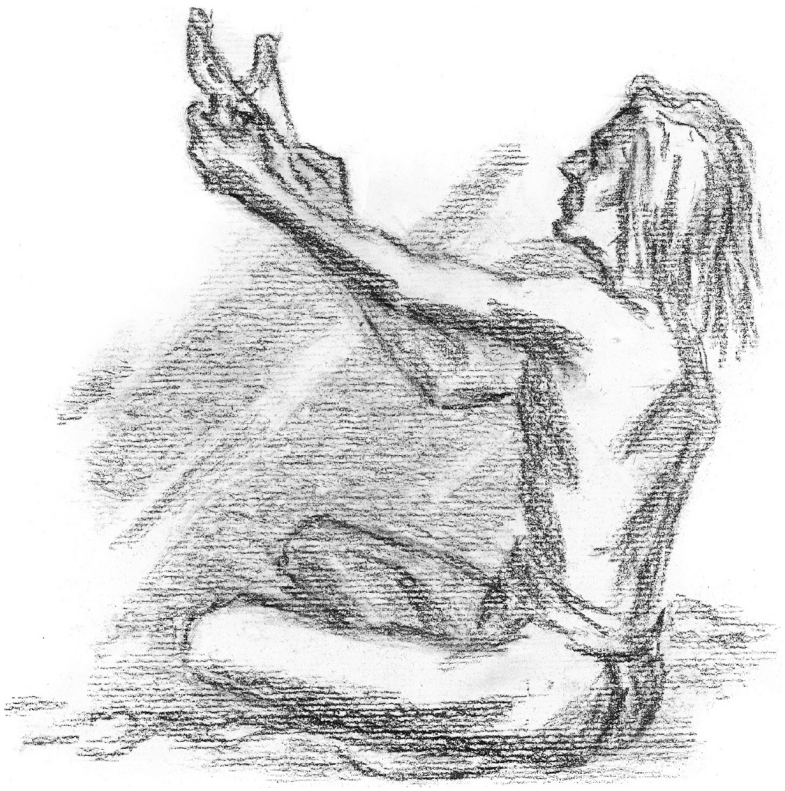
15

Singing-Moon took the acorns Max and Terry had in their sacks. She put them into a clay pot that had a pointed bottom. Then she filled the pot with water and ashes. She dropped stones into the fire and used them to prop up the pot.

She brought out a fur robe for each of the children to wear while their shorts and T-shirts were drying by the fire.

Her grandfather was sitting next to Terry and Max. “Now tell us what happened to you today.”

First Terry told Singing-Moon and Wise-Defender about the copperhead snake hiding in the acorns and how Max killed the snake with his slingshot.



“You should change your name to Quick-and-Brave,” Singing-Moon said.

Max shook his head. “I was scared stiff. Terry thinks the slingshot is magic.”

“Let me see it.” Wise-Defender reached for the slingshot.

Max fitted a stone into the wide rubber band and handed him the slingshot.

Wise-Defender took aim at the lowest branch of the maple tree and let fly. *Pow!* The stone crashed into the branch.

“Thief! Thief!” A startled bluejay flew out of the tree.

Wise-Defender handed back the slingshot. “I don’t know if it’s magic, but it’s better than a bow and arrow for killing snakes.”

Max told how Terry had dragged Like-a-Possum away from the tree in the thunderstorm.

“Terry!” Singing-Moon stared at her. “How did you know the lightning would split the tree? Is this more magic?”

“I didn’t know,” Terry said. “I was taught that lightning strikes the tallest things around. That was the only tree there.”

When Singing-Moon learned that they’d eaten nothing but berries and cornmeal, she heated stones and warmed a stew.

Wise-Defender stayed to eat with them. Blackbird-on-the-Wing came home in time to join them. He had spent the day building a deadfall trap for a bear. Max wanted to know what a deadfall was, but Blackbird-on-the-Wing laughed. “It’s different each time. I have to trick the bear into making very heavy logs fall on him. Would you like to come with me tomorrow when I go hunting? I can show you the trap then.”

Max was excited. “I’d like very much to go,” he said.

Terry was happy that she had not been invited.

Early next morning, Max left to go hunting with Blackbird-on-the-Wing.

Terry looked into the wooden bowl where the acorns had been soaking in water and wood ashes. She saw that the shells had fallen off the kernels. They were like little nuts now.

She helped Singing-Moon rinse the kernels in clear water and spread them on a flat stone to dry in the sun.

Later in the day Singing-Moon and Terry took turns using a stone pounder in the hollow of a small log to grind the kernels into acorn flour. Singing-Moon mixed the flour with water to make little flat loaves of acorn bread. She wrapped the loaves in vine leaves and baked them in the hot ashes of her cooking fire.

Some of the corn in the planting field was ripe. Terry went with Singing-Moon to help pick it. They hung the baby in his pouch from the lowest branch of a persimmon tree next to the field. He laughed when he swung back and forth as the breeze swayed the branch.

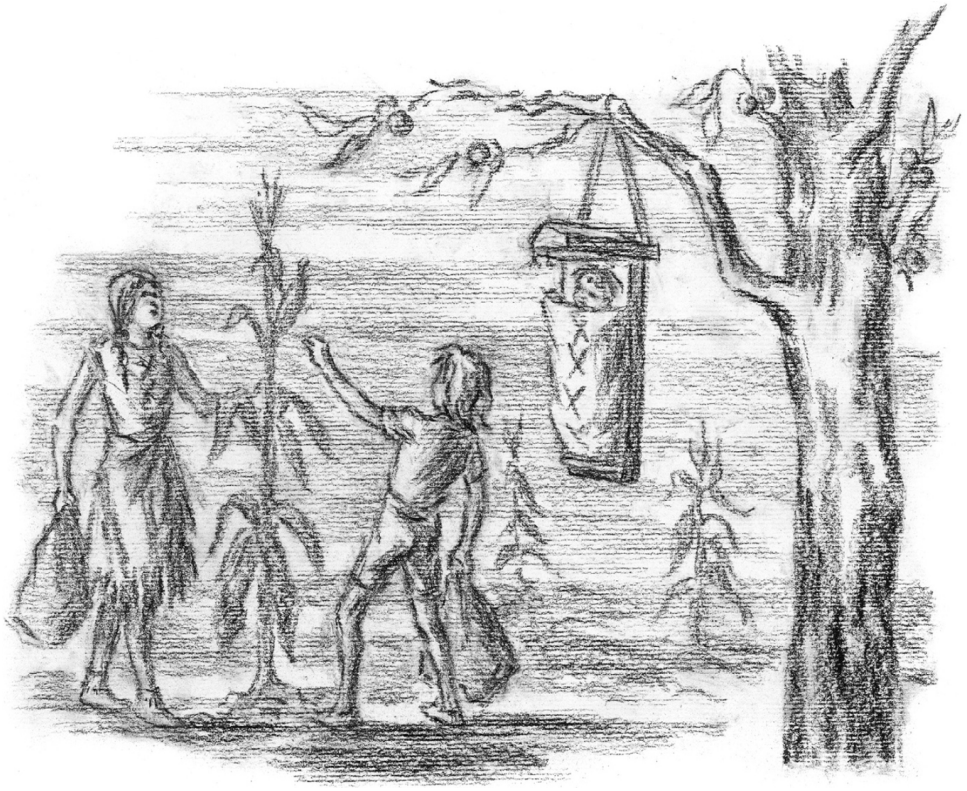
Singing-Moon showed Terry which ears of corn were ripe. She put them into the sack she'd used for the acorns the day before.

When they were ready to take the corn to the house, the baby was fast asleep. Singing-Moon put him on her back again.

They picked a few of the biggest ears to roast in their husks.

Singing-Moon showed Terry how to braid together the husks of the corn to be dried. They strung these from the pole above the little fire in the house.

After Singing-Moon fed her baby, she hung his pouch on the maple tree and brought out some patties made of cornmeal and maple syrup.



Terry was so hungry that the sticky patty tasted wonderful.

Singing-Moon nibbled hers happily. “I never want to eat anything after this.” When she’d eaten the last crumb, she licked her fingers. “You must be thirsty. I know I am. Let’s get a drink.” Singing-Moon ran over to the flat rock by the stream.

Terry followed her. They kneeled down and cupped their hands to drink the cool clear water.

“I should have brought the water carrier,” Singing-Moon said. “We will need fresh water for cooking.”

“I’ll get it,” Terry told her.

The water container was stored under one of the benches inside the house. It was carved of wood and was heavy. There was a leather carrying strap. Terry slipped it over her shoulder. She had to make several trips to the stream before she had enough water to fill Singing-Moon’s clay pots and her big wooden bowl.

Singing-Moon started heating stones in the fire in front of her house. The water in the bowl was boiling by the time Max and Blackbird-on-the-Wing

returned from the hunt.

17

Max was excited. “Look what we caught!”

Terry saw that he was carrying a string of fish. “I thought you were going bear hunting.”

“The bear was smarter than I was,” Blackbird-on-the-Wing told her. “He must have knocked over the heavy logs with his paw. Then he ate the bait and went away.”

“I’m glad he didn’t wait for you,” Singing-Moon said.

“So am I!” Her husband hugged her.

“When we went upstream, we saw fish jumping right out of the water,” Max said. “Blackbird-on-the-Wing tried shooting them with his bow and

arrow, but the fish were too quick. I dug some worms, and Blackbird-on-the-Wing had a couple of bone fishhooks and some twine in that leather bag tied to his belt."

"It would have been more fun to get the fish with my bow and arrow," Blackbird-on-the-Wing told them.

Singing-Moon cleaned and cut up the fish. She dropped them into the water in the wooden bowl. Terry added more hot rocks to keep the water boiling.

Terry saw Singing-Moon lift one of the slabs of bark on the ground near the house. Under it was a round hole lined with mats of woven reeds. Singing-Moon took out roots, cornmeal, dried herbs, and berries, and put them into the bowl with the fish. Terry helped by putting the slab back on the hole.

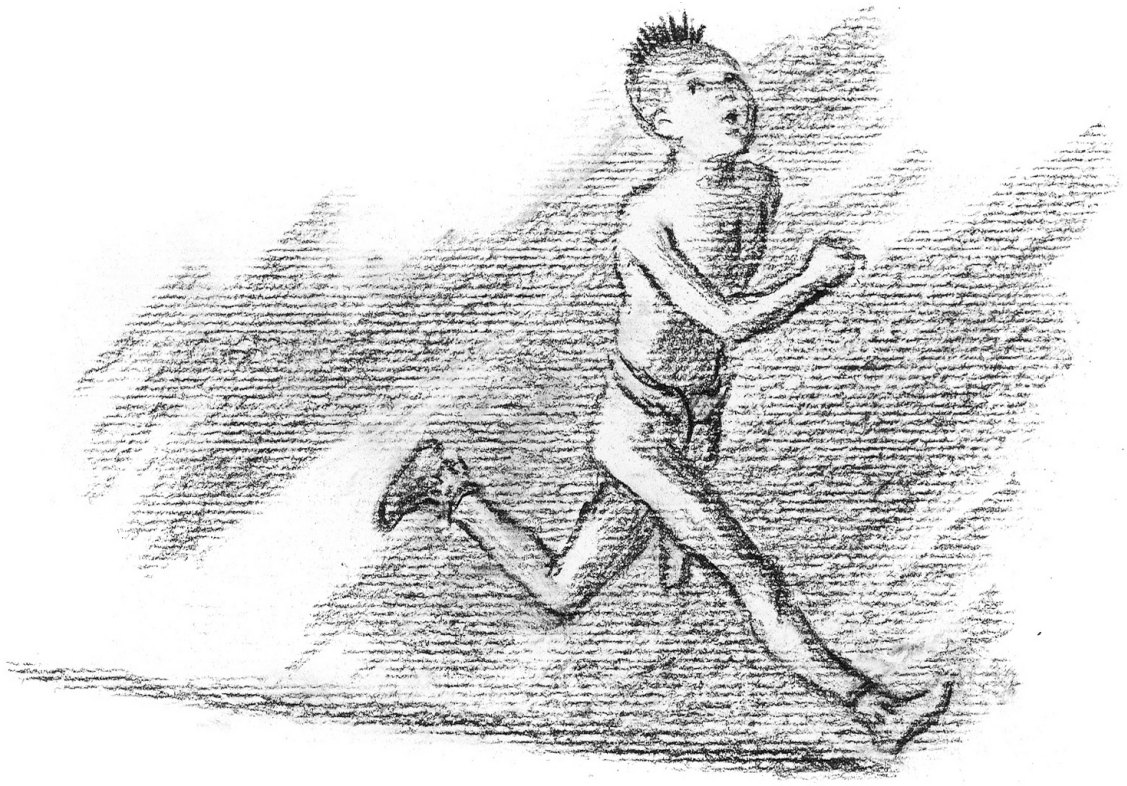
Max and Terry enjoyed the stew more than the one they'd had the night before. Max thought it was because he was getting used to this sort of food. Terry knew it was because she'd helped prepare it.

Before they finished eating, Terry heard a *boom-boom-boom*. "What's that?"

"Our drum," Blackbird-on-the-Wing said. "Do you like to dance?"

"I do, but Max doesn't," Terry told him.

Like-a-Possum came running over to where they were sitting near the fire. His eyes were shining. "Come on. They're getting ready to start!"



Boom, boom, boom! The booming continued.

“I keep chewing to the beat of that drum,” Max told Terry.

It was a haunting sound. Terry felt as if it were calling her. She stood up and helped Singing-Moon wipe the clamshells and put them away.

“Hurry!” Like-a-Possum begged. “They’re already starting.”

“That shouldn’t bother you,” Blackbird-on-the-Wing told him. “You may join the dance whenever you want to.”

“It’s just that I hate to miss any of it,” Like-a-Possum said. “It’s been ages since we had a dance.”

Blackbird-on-the-Wing laughed. “Run along then and start dancing. We’ll see you later.”

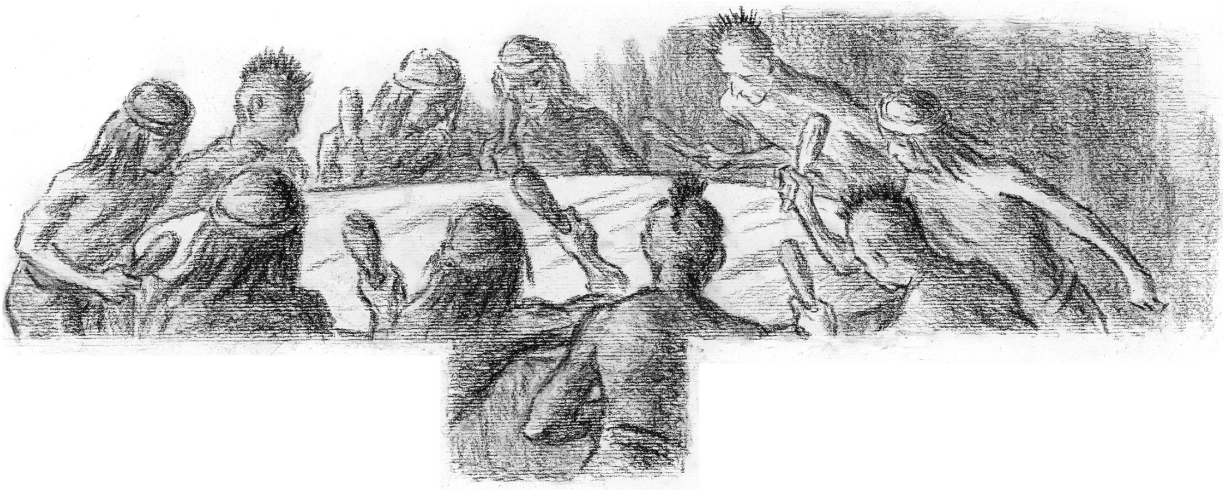
16

Singing-Moon strapped her baby on her back. She walked with Blackbird-on-the-Wing toward the open space in the middle of the village. Terry and Max came after them. On the way they met Wise-Defender and Snow-Flower going to the dance.

"The sound of the drum makes me want to dance," Snow-Flower said.

"It makes me feel young again," her great-grandfather told them.

A bonfire was blazing in the clearing where the dance was going on. Everybody in the village seemed to be there. Like-a-Possum was already dancing.



Ten men were gathered around a big leather drum at the edge of the clearing.Each man had one drumstick. They all beat the drum in the same rhythm. And they all chanted a song with words that seemed to belong to no language but echoed through the woods with a meaning of its own.

The dancers began or stopped dancing as they chose. The line of dancers moved clockwise around the clearing. Each dancer made up his own dance steps, but all the steps beat in rhythm with the drum. Max and Terry didn’t have any trouble keeping up.

For some dances the drum beat more slowly. It speeded up for others. Snow-Flower wiggled and squirmed all the way through the snake dance. When the turkey dance was played, almost everybody flapped their arms.

During some dances the drum was silent. The singers chanted in a rhythm for the dancers to follow.

Singing-Moon's baby bounced up and down and chirped with joy. At last he fell asleep.

Blackbird-on-the-Wing stepped out of the line of dancers and signed to his wife that the baby was asleep. Singing-Moon moved away from the dance. Max and Terry followed her.

"You can go on dancing if you want to," Singing-Moon told them. "We're going to bed."

Terry looked at Max. "What about it?"

"I never thought I'd like dancing, but this is fun," he said. "I'd like to dance a while longer."

Terry grinned. "Me too."

"We'll see you in the morning—if you're awake." Blackbird-on-the-Wing and Singing-Moon took their baby home.

Max and Terry stepped back into the moving line of dancers. For another hour they followed the rhythm of the drum and of the strange chant.

Even after they were asleep in the little house, Terry still heard the haunting music in her dreams.

Next morning, Like-a-Possum came over to tell everybody the news of the day. “They’re heating stones for the sweat lodge! I’m going to take a steam bath.”

“I’d better take one,” Blackbird-on-the-Wing said. He turned to Max and Terry. “What about you two? Steam baths are good for your health.”

“What’s a sweat lodge?” Terry asked.

Singing-Moon was busy with her baby. “Go with Blackbird-on-the-Wing,” she said. “He will show you.”

Like-a-Possum dashed on ahead.

Terry and Max followed Blackbird-on-the-Wing around the inside of the stockade fence. When they came to an open gate, they saw that the stream was close to the other side of the fence.

On the ground near the gate was a small dome made like the roofs of the houses. Blackbird-on-the-Wing lifted it off the ground. Under the dome they saw a big hole lined with clay and stones. “This is the sweat lodge.”

Two men were heating bundles of stones in a fire close to the lodge. A woman kept coming through the gate from the stream with armloads of wet leaves.

When the stones were hot, the men dropped them into the hole and covered them with the leaves. They closed the hole with the dome and waited until clouds of steam seeped out.

The men used long sticks to take out the stones.

Blackbird-on-the-Wing held the dome while the woman and the two men climbed into the hole. He watched Like-a-Possum scramble down. Then he slipped inside and lowered the dome over his head.

Terry was frightened. “Max! He’ll be smothered!”

Max was worried, too, but he didn’t want Terry to know it. “Blackbird-on-the-Wing knows what he’s doing. He’ll be okay.”

They stood and watched the steam drifting out of the cracks in the dome. It seemed forever before someone shoved the dome off the hole.

One of the two men who had heated the stones climbed out. He was dripping with sweat, but he turned around to lift Like-a-Possum out of the

hole.

The woman who collected the wet leaves was next. Then came the other heater of stones. At last Blackbird-on-the-Wing burst into view. He was so covered with sweat that he gleamed in the bright sunlight.

Without a word, he leaped out of the hole, dashed to the gate, and jumped into the cool stream.

First Like-a-Possum, and then the woman and the two men who had shared the sweat lodge with him, followed Blackbird-on-the-Wing into the water.

Max stared at them. “It must be good for their health. They all look better than they did before.”

Terry laughed. “That’s because they’re clean now.”

20

Most of the people in the village took turns using the sweat lodge. They kept heating stones and covering them with wet leaves.

“Maybe we should try it,” Max said.

“Some other day,” Terry told him. “Let’s go see if Singing-Moon thinks it’s time to eat.”

Singing-Moon was boiling ears of corn in their husks. She pulled them out of the water with flat sticks. Terry and Max had to let the husks cool before they could strip them off the ears. Blackbird-on-the-Wing came home in time to join in eating them.

The beans and squash and pumpkins as well as the corn were ripening in the planting fields. For days Terry worked with all the women and girls in the village to gather and store the food. Much of it was hung to dry in the smoke over the fires in the houses.

Every day Max went with Blackbird-on-the-Wing to hunt rabbits, squirrels, beavers, partridges, ducks, and geese. One day he watched a heavy wild turkey fly across an open field. When it fell down, tired from flying, Max caught the turkey in his hands.

Another day he went along on a deer hunt with all the men and boys from the village. The boys each had a flat bone and a stick to beat it with. They stood a hundred paces apart in the forest and beat the bones.

The boys drew closer and closer to each other, banging all the while. They drove the frightened deer in the woods toward the river. When the deer dashed into the water, the men were there in dugout canoes. They threw lassos around the necks of the deer.

After that, the women and girls were busy for a long time smoking the venison and tanning the hides. Terry helped Singing-Moon stretch and work the leather with her hands to make it soft.

The leaves on the maple tree turned to scarlet and gold. Then they blew away in the wind. The children gathered hickory nuts and persimmons.

The weather was much colder now. Singing-Moon made deerskin clothes for Terry and Max. They felt strange at first, especially the leather stockings and the jackets. The sleeves were not sewn on. They were separate pieces, tied onto the shoulder with laces. But the clothes were warm and soft. Before long the children were used to them.

Singing-Moon folded their T-shirts and shorts and stored them under the bench they slept on. When she finished making two pairs of moccasins, she put away their sneakers, too.

After all the harvesting and hunting was finished, the village had a festival with feasting as well as dancing. It went on for three days.

21

There wasn’t much work for the two children to do now. Singing-Moon spent most of her time pounding corn into meal.

Max and Terry went to visit Wise-Defender. The women who lived in the big house with him were always preparing food, tanning hides, gathering firewood, weaving baskets, and taking care of children. They had no time to talk to the old man or listen to his stories.

Terry and Max were happy to listen to him.

Wise-Defender was carving tiny purple and white beads from two different kinds of seashells. While he worked he talked to the children.

“Everything has a spirit,” he told them. “Not just people, but also animals, trees, birds, the sun, the moon, and the four winds. When an animal has to be killed, his spirit must be asked for pardon.”

Wise-Defender showed them thin sticks, each about six inches long, with picture writing on them. Max and Terry couldn’t read it, but Wise-Defender said that all the tribes who had dealings with the Leni-Lenape understood it. The sticks were used to send messages, and also to keep a record of history.

“Long ago the Leni-Lenape lived beside the blue sea the sun sinks into at the end of the day,” Wise-Defender told them. “When trouble came, the Leni-Lenape moved to settle somewhere else. When trouble started there, they moved away again. After thousands of moons and many more moves, they came here where the sun comes up out of a gray sea. The Leni-Lenape were the first tribe to settle here.

“Other tribes say we are women, because we do not want war. But when they go to war with each other, they ask us to help make peace.”

Max and Terry watched while Wise-Defender carved and polished a tiny bead.

“I’ve run out of shells,” he said. “I was making these beads for Singing-Moon to sew on her headband.”

“Where do you get the shells?” Terry asked.

“There are shell banks by the seashore,” Wise-Defender told her. “Blackbird-on-the-Wing knows where they are.”

He stood up and stretched. “I wonder what’s going on outdoors. Let’s go and see.” He picked up a bow and a case of arrows. Then he pushed back the mat that covered the nearest door. Max and Terry followed him out of the house. It was getting dark.

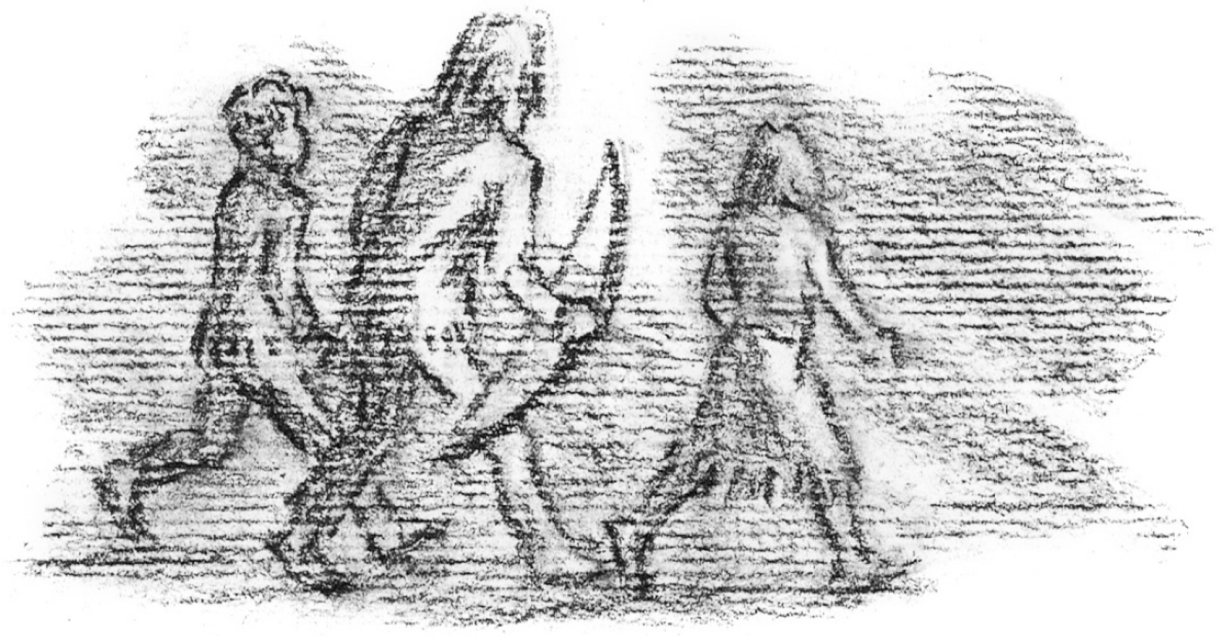
Wise-Defender raised his bow and fitted an arrow to the cord. “Don’t move!” he whispered.

Something tawny and spotted leaped from the shadows. The bowstring twanged.

A big spotted cat stumbled and fell to the ground a few feet in front of them.

“I’m sorry I have to do this to you, Old Lynx,” Wise-Defender said as he shot another arrow into the cat. It took two more before the lynx was dead.

“As it gets to be winter,” Wise-Defender told the children, “animals leap the fence and come close to the houses. I’d better walk you home.”



22

The next day was sunny but cold and windy. “It will be colder at the shore,” Blackbird-on-the-Wing told Terry. “Do you still want to go there?”

“It will be even colder soon,” Terry argued. “And Wise-Defender can’t make the beads for Singing-Moon’s headband if he hasn’t any shells.”

“Wrap yourselves in these. They’ll keep you warm.” Singing-Moon brought three furry robes out of storage.

Max took one with shaggy black fur.

“Be sure to wear the fur on the inside,” Singing-Moon said. “It’s warmer that way.”

All three carried their big sacks. Blackbird-on-the-Wing had a spear as well. They followed the trail along the stream, across the wide plain, and past the pond where they had gone swimming. After a while they heard seabirds screaming. The path led to a cliff. They looked down at the waters of an enormous bay.

Blackbird-on-the-Wing pointed across the water. “Those are the Haunted Woods.”

“Terry,” Max whispered. “I’m sure that’s Staten Island!”

“Only there’s no bridge,” Terry agreed, “or any buildings.”

The path snaked its way down the steep cliff. They had to grab hold of bushes to keep from sliding.

At the bottom of the cliff they came to a narrow, stony beach. Blackbird-on-the-Wing led them under overhanging rocks and around uprooted trees to a little cave hidden by trailing vines.

The floor of the cave was damp and covered with shells.

Blackbird-on-the-Wing showed them the two kinds of shells to gather. There were many of them there.

“We have to work fast. When the tide is in, this cave is full of water.” Blackbird-on-the-Wing was using his spear to dig up live clams and oysters and drop them into his sack.

Max and Terry worked as fast as they could. When the sand under their moccasins started to become squashy, Blackbird-on-the-Wing picked up his sack and led the way out of the cave.

They walked quickly back to the path and climbed carefully up the cliff.

The wind was blowing harder now. It was much colder here than in the cave.

Terry was glad to have the soft beaver robe. It didn’t look at all like her aunt Sophie’s beaver coat. That was sheared to look like velvet. And her aunt didn’t wear the fur on the inside next to her skin.

Blackbird-on-the-Wing opened his bag of cornmeal. They each took a handful and chewed it slowly as they walked home with the heavy sacks.

23

Very early one morning, Max and Blackbird-on-the-Wing found a fat bear in the deadfall.

Two young men helped them drag it back to the village. Their wives joined Singing-Moon in the job of skinning the bear and cutting it up. This kept them busy for days.

The meat was shared with all the families. Some of it was skewered on sticks and held over the fire to cook. And some was placed in the coals to roast. And of course, every big wooden bowl in the village was boiling.

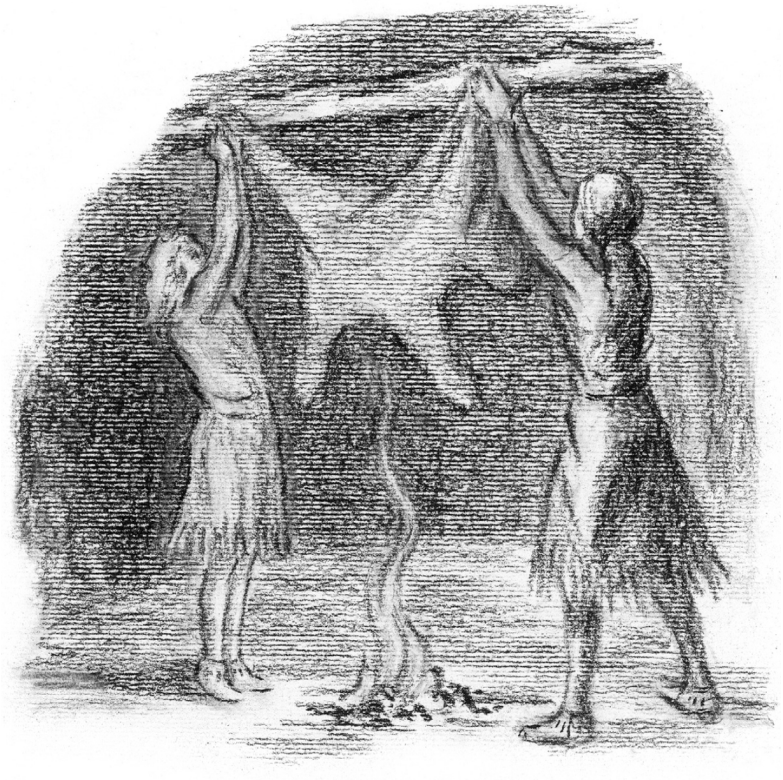
After the meat in one enormous bowl was cooked, Singing-Moon skimmed the fat off the top of the boiling water. She poured the fat into a clay jar. “We’re lucky that bear hadn’t gone to sleep for the winter. I thought I was going to run out of bear grease.”

“What do you use it for?” Terry asked.

“It keeps mosquitoes away,” Singing-Moon told her. “If you rub it on yourself when you’re outdoors in very cold weather, it helps you stay warm. And the men use it on their hair.”

The young men and boys shaved the sides of their heads and left a wide strip of hair in the middle. Now Terry knew how they made the hair stick up straight like a rooster’s comb.

As the days grew shorter and colder, Singing-Moon did most of her work indoors. One day, after the meat was smoked and stored away, Terry helped her tan the bearskin. They hung it over the fire so the smoke would keep it from molding.



Singing-Moon began to feed her baby.

Max pushed back the flap and came rushing through one of the doors. Blackbird-on-the-Wing was right behind him. They were both excited.

“A messenger has come from one of the tribes up the river,” Blackbird-on-the-Wing said. “The chief of the tribe in the next valley wants to make war on his tribe. The messenger asked Wise-Defender to go back with him to make peace.” Blackbird-on-the-Wing looked at Max. “Tell them the rest.”

“Wise-Defender wants me to go with him,” Max said.

Terry grabbed his arm. “You can’t go without me!”

Max grinned. “I told Wise-Defender that’s what you’d say.”

“Why can’t someone else go with Wise-Defender?” Singing-Moon wanted to know.

“I asked him,” Blackbird-on-the-Wing told her. “Wise-Defender wouldn’t tell me the reason.”

24

Red-Arrow stood in front of Wise-Defender's house. He was a tall, strong young man, dressed in deerskins like the Leni-Lenape, but his face and hands were covered with designs of red paint.

"Oh, isn't he beautiful?" Snow-Flower whispered.

Everybody in the village had gathered around to look at the messenger from upriver. They all thought he looked wonderful.

"I bring you greetings of peace and friendship," Red-Arrow told them. "Your chief, Wise-Defender, has agreed to go with me to make peace with a tribe that talks of war against my people."

"I will leave tomorrow," Wise-Defender said. "Max and Terry will come with me."

They didn't pack much for the trip. Singing-Moon gave the children each a supply of cornmeal in a little bag. She handed Terry a small flat stick and a little wooden bowl of red clay. "Be sure you paint red designs on Wise-Defender before he meets the other chiefs."

They put extra fur robes in their big sacks. Before they left, Wise-Defender gave Terry and Max each three round paddles that had wooden rims around a mesh of thin leather strips. "Keep these in your sacks.

"They look like tennis rackets," Max told his sister. "He must be planning a friendly game with the other chiefs."

The sky was clear and blue as the four travelers started on their journey. There was no wind, but the air was cold, and the ground was crunchy under their feet. They walked along the path near the stream.

Red-Arrow went first. A stone axe hung from his belt. He carried a sack as well as a bow and arrows. Terry and Max came after him with their sacks

and Max's slingshot. Wise-Defender was last, holding a sack and carrying his spear over his shoulder.

They went the same way that Blackbird-on-the-Wing had taken Terry and Max to look for seashells.

At the foot of the winding path down the cliff, Red-Arrow ran to a clump of bushes. He peeked into a thick tangle of vines and branches. "It's still here! I was afraid someone might find it. My father and I worked for three years to make this canoe." He started to pull off the twisted vines.

The canoe was carved from a single tree and was very heavy. It took all four of them to shove it across the narrow beach into the water.

"How did you get it out of the water all by yourself?" Terry asked Red-Arrow.

"It was high tide then," he told her. "I paddled right up to the bushes and tied up the canoe. After that I covered it with vines and pine branches."

They took off their leather stockings and their moccasins and put them into their sacks. Then they waded to the boat with the sacks.

The paddles were in the canoe. Red-Arrow handed one to each of them and started paddling north across the bay.

25

It was much colder in the canoe than in the woods. Wise-Defender made them all put fur robes over their bare legs and feet. The paddling kept their arms warm.

They paddled steadily north and past a few small islands. After a while the bay split into two rivers. Red-Arrow steered the canoe up the river on the left.

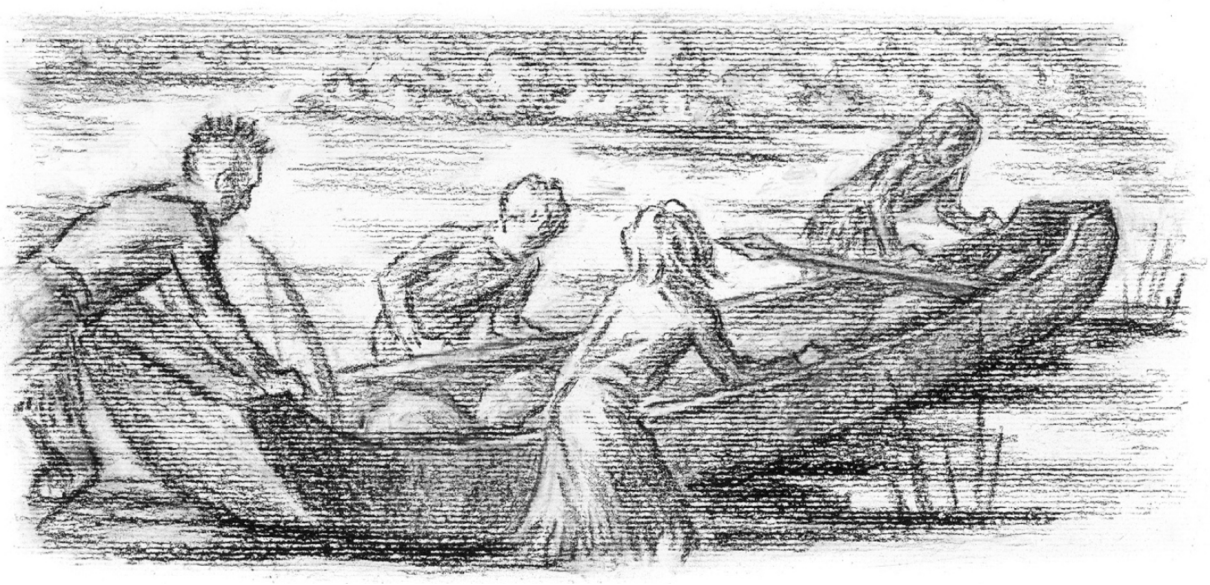
Dark forests were on both sides of them. Farther on, gigantic stone cliffs rose up on one side of the river.

Still they went on paddling.

The sun was low in the sky when Red-Arrow steered the canoe to a shallow little cove by the shore. “There’s a shelter here that I use when I’m on fishing trips.”

They all climbed out and shoved the canoe into the weeds on the riverbank. Red-Arrow put large rocks around it to keep the canoe in place. They took their packs to an overhanging rock.

This was the shelter.



It was getting dark. Everybody chewed cornmeal and drank the clear water of the river. They made a pile of leaves and soft branches. Then they rolled themselves in their fur robes, lay down on the pile, and slept until the morning sun woke them.

For days they paddled up the river. The wooded shores were hilly now. And they could see mountains ahead.

Each night they slept in a different shelter that Red-Arrow knew. Some were huts of branches covered with leaves. One was a small cave in a cliff.

It started raining hard on the fourth day. Wise-Defender took from his sack a beautiful cape of turkey feathers knitted together to make a smooth, downy waterproof covering. They all huddled under the big cape until the rain stopped.

Wise-Defender was afraid the tribes would start fighting before he could stop them. He was in too much of a hurry to take time to hunt or fish or cook. All they ate was cornmeal.

After dark on the seventh day, Red-Arrow paddled to the shore of the river. “My village is near here,” he said. “I hoped we’d reach it before sunset, but the moon is rising, so we’ll be able to follow the trail to my home.”

In the dim light Red-Arrow found the clump of reeds where he always hid his canoe. They picked up their sacks and waded ashore.

Red-Arrow led them on a trail that went up a tree-covered hill.

Before they reached the top of the hill, they heard voices.

Red-Arrow signed to them to be quiet. He put his hand to his ear and listened. Then he turned and silently led them back down to the river again.

“We’ll have to go to my home by the secret way,” Red-Arrow whispered. “Those are not my people up there in the woods. I heard them planning to attack our village tonight!”

26

The four of them made their way in a wide circle through the forest at the base of the hill. They came to the gate of a high stockade fence. It was closed and barred.

Red-Arrow hooted four times like an owl. He waited a moment and hooted once more.

A man with a spear opened the gate a crack. He looked hard at Red-Arrow in the moonlight. When he was sure who it was, he opened the gate. After they were all inside, he shut and barred it again.

Max and Terry expected to see a group of houses inside the stockade. Instead, there was just one very long house. It had a curved roof with an opening all the way along the top for smoke to come out.

The house had a single door in the center of a long wall. Red-Arrow opened it for them to go in.

Terry whispered to Wise-Defender, “Singing-Moon told me to paint you.”

Wise-Defender spoke to Red-Arrow. “While you tell White-Otter I am here, I want to be alone with Terry and Max.”

They stepped into the house. Many families lived here. Each one had its own fire and its own living space. The spaces were divided by mats or by animal skins. And over each fire hung meat, fish, corn, and anything else that needed to be smoked.

Red-Arrow took them to a corner of one of the spaces. It was divided from the rest of the apartment by hanging animal skins. “I am not married, so I live with my cousins. This is where I sleep. No one will bother you here. I’ll come for you after I talk with Chief White-Otter.”

After Red-Arrow left them, Terry took out the little wooden bowl of red clay. Wise-Defender helped her mix it with a little water from the jar near the family cooking fire.

Terry loved to draw. She used the little stick Singing-Moon had given her to draw a red dove of peace on Wise-Defender's forehead and on the backs of his hands. She drew a sun with rays coming out of it on each of his cheeks. Then she scattered butterflies and stars all over his arms.

Max watched her. "That's enough, Terry. Don't overdo it!"

At this point Red-Arrow returned. "White-Otter wants to talk to you."

Terry and Max followed Wise-Defender to the chief's quarters.

White-Otter was a man about forty years old. He was decorated in both red and black paint.

"You can't talk peace at this point," Wise-Defender told him. "Don't wait for Strong-Stone to attack you here. Go into the woods and take him by surprise. I will go with you. My young friends will stay here."

27

White-Otter listened while Wise-Defender whispered his plan. Then he had Red-Arrow give orders to each young man in the big house.

One by one, carrying spears and bows and arrows, they slipped out of the gate and into the surrounding forest. Red-Arrow went after them.

Terry saw that Wise-Defender was ready to follow with White-Otter. “Why are you going? You’re a peacemaker. This is war!”

“I have my reasons,” Wise-Defender said.

The two chiefs went out into the shadows. They were careful not to step where the moonbeams sifted down through the trees.

“Wise-Defender had a sack with him,” Max told his sister. “I wonder what’s in it.”

“I was so mad at him that I didn’t even notice the sack. Why should I care what’s in it?” Terry was almost crying.

“Did you want Wise-Defender to let those men attack the village?” Max asked.

“He came here to make peace,” Terry reminded him.

“He was going to get the chiefs to talk to each other,” Max said, “but Strong-Stone is not in the mood for talking.”

Terry didn’t answer. She felt sick just thinking about what was happening out there in the forest.

All the people in the big house were very quiet. Although nobody had told them what was going on, they seemed to feel danger.

The children lay on the benches, but they kept their eyes wide open. Every mother stayed close to her family. The old people huddled around the cooking fires. And everybody was listening.

Max was expecting whoops and hollers like the ones he’d heard in old cowboy-and-Indian movies. Terry was waiting for shrieks of pain, but all they heard was the wind in the tall pine trees.

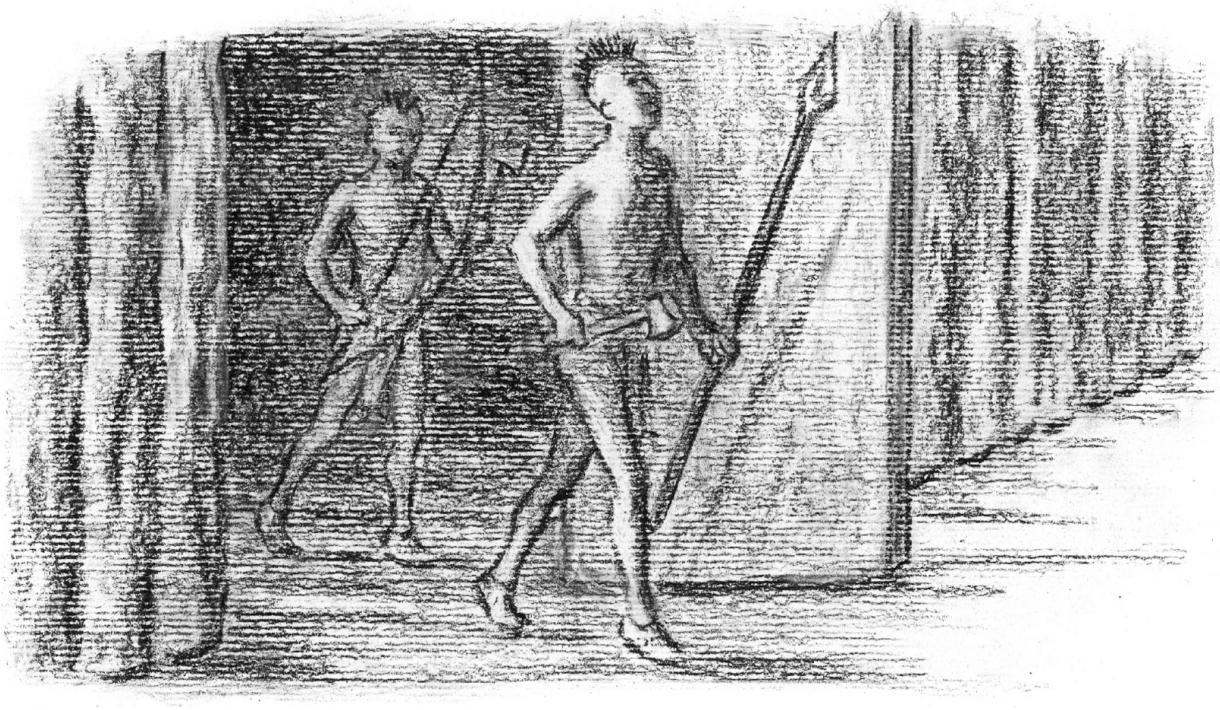
After what seemed like years of waiting, they heard an owl hoot four times. There was a pause. Then the owl hooted once more.

Perhaps it was a trick. The old men picked up spears. Max put a stone in his slingshot. They went out of the house to open the gate in the stockade.

When the gate was opened slightly, they heard Wise-Defender’s voice. “Open wide,” he commanded, “and welcome your guests! They are tired and hungry.”

Both Max and Terry were sure it was a terrible trick of some kind. But the old men opened the gate wide.

The strangers walked in slowly, one at a time.



26

The strangers entered the big house. They were carrying their weapons, and they held their heads high, but they wouldn't look anybody in the eye. The last to come in was their chief, Strong-Stone, walking between Wise-Defender and White-Otter.

Strong-Stone was painted all over in fierce designs of black and red. He, too, held his head high, but he glared at everybody.

The women in the house were soon busy heating stones to boil their vegetables and cornmeal and putting chunks of meat to cook over the blazing coals. As soon as any food was ready, the guests were served. At first they seemed shy about eating, but once they started, the strangers began to smile and talk to the women who were serving them. After he'd finished a large serving of roast beaver-tail, even Strong-Stone stopped glaring.

When all the people in the house had eaten their fill, the floor was spread with soft skins for the guests to sleep on. Before long they lay down beside their bows and arrows and went to sleep.

Max and Terry shared Red-Arrow's corner of his cousins' apartment with him and Wise-Defender. They fell asleep as soon as they lay down.

Early next morning, Wise-Defender whispered in Terry's ear, "Wake up!"

Terry opened her eyes and sat up.

Still whispering, Wise-Defender said, "You must fill a large bowl with water and get it so hot that it steams. Don't let anybody drop any food into it. I want you and Max to wash your hair, your face, and any skin that's not hidden by your clothes. Try not to let anyone see you doing this. Stay here until I send for you." Wise-Defender walked away.

Max and Red-Arrow were still sleeping. Everyone else in the house was fast asleep, too.

Terry saw that a few embers were glowing in last night's cooking fire. She added sticks and dry grass from a pile and blew on the red embers until they burst into flame. Then she pushed stones into the fire and threw bigger logs onto it.

She set a big wooden bowl near the fire and filled it from a container of water. When the water began to steam, Terry held her hands over it until they were damp. She rubbed the dirt off them. Then she leaned over the bowl and let the steam drift over her face and her hair. She had to keep adding stones to the bowl to keep it boiling. She rubbed and steamed as much of herself as she could. She didn't have a mirror, so she decided to wake Max.

Terry put her finger on Max's lips.

He opened his eyes.

"*Sh-sh!* Just tell me if I've got all the dirt off myself," Terry said.

It was all Max could do to keep from yelling, but he managed to whisper. "Are you nuts?"

"Wise-Defender told me to get washed," Terry explained. "He wants you to get cleaned up, too. I guess he's ashamed of us. We are pretty dirty."

29

Most of the day Wise-Defender was in a meeting with White-Otter and Strong-Stone. They sat around the fire in White-Otter's living space. They talked in loud, angry voices. Everybody else in the big house was very quiet. They were listening to what the chiefs had to say.

Terry and Max stayed in Red-Arrow's corner of his cousins' apartment. They were now both as clean as they could get without soap. Terry stared at her brother. "I'd forgotten how blond your hair is."

Max laughed. "You should see yourself. You're pink! And that makes your eyes greener." They stopped talking to listen to the chiefs. They wanted to know what had happened in the woods the night before to stop Strong-Stone's attack.

Nobody spoke of that. Instead the two chiefs argued about hunting and fishing territories, about planting fields and berry patches. They seemed to say the same things over and over.

Sometimes Wise-Defender would suggest something. Neither of the chiefs wanted to listen to him.

Wise-Defender left them and went to where Max and Terry were waiting for him. "Come with me," he said.

He led them to where the two chiefs were still arguing. Wise-Defender held up his hand. "Stop! I want you to meet these messengers who came to save you from the horrors of war."

The chiefs were seated on the ground by the fire. They took one look at the children standing over them and then seemed even more terrified than Singing-Moon when she first saw them.

Terry had acted in a school play about Greek gods. "Foolish mortals," she growled in a deep voice. "Listen to your wise friend, before disaster

strikes!” Max folded his arms and looked stern.

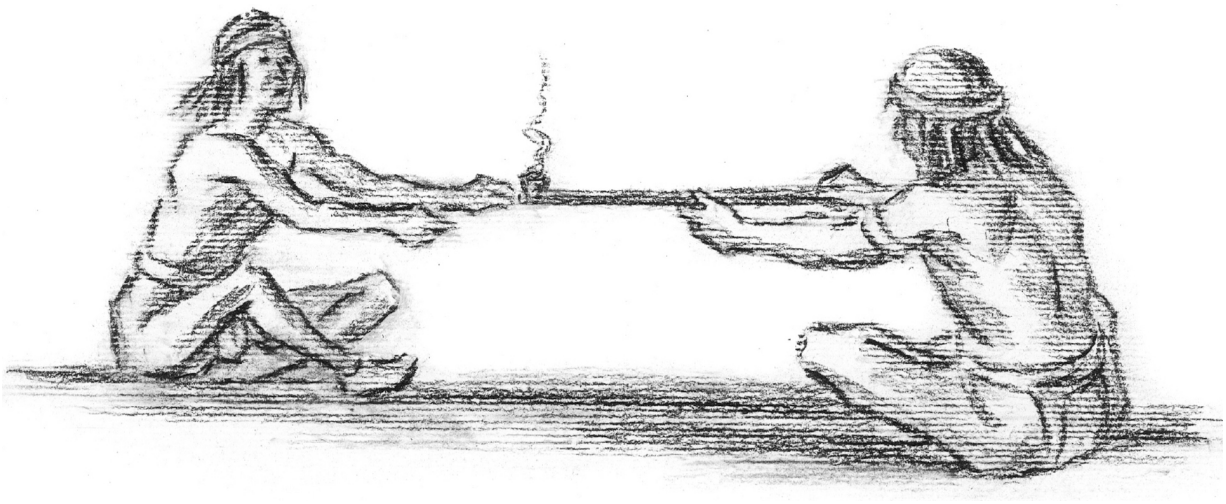
Wise-Defender kneeled before the children. “Have mercy! Do not destroy these good men. Give them a chance to learn to share the gifts of nature.”

Terry was having so much fun that she would have gone on talking, but Max dragged his sister away.

Wise-Defender sat on the ground facing the two chiefs and suggested that they should go fishing on different days. Strong-Stone said he’d fish on the first day after the full moon. White-Otter liked the second day. Before long they found ways to solve all their problems.

Wise-Defender brought out a clay pipe with a copper bowl. The two leaders smoked the Pipe of Peace together.

Terry and Max went back to find Red-Arrow in his cousins’ living quarters.



“Please tell us what happened last night,” Terry begged.

Red-Arrow grinned. “Wise-Defender took along a sackful of ropes. Each time one of our men surprised one of theirs and aimed a spear or an arrow at him, another one of our men would lasso, gag, and tie him up. Then Wise-Defender told him all we wanted was a peace talk. If he promised to come peacefully, we would let him keep his weapons and give him food and shelter.

“I don’t know how he did it, but Wise-Defender got everyone, even their chief, to agree to his terms.”

Red-Arrow took a good look at Max and Terry. “You look different,” he said. “If I didn’t know you, I’d be scared.”

Paddling down the river was much quicker than paddling up had been. The canoe followed the current. It rained on the third day. After sunset the rain turned to snow. In the morning the sky was clear, but the air was colder.

Very early on the fifth day, Red-Arrow steered into the wide bay.

Max jumped from the boat onto the narrow beach, carrying his sack. He helped Wise-Defender get ashore with his things. Then Terry threw her sack onto the beach and leaped after it.

Red-Arrow wanted to be home before the river froze. He waved good-bye. The others started up the cliff. It had been snowing, and the path was hard to find.

At the top, the snow on the level ground was much deeper. It reached to Terry's knees. Her sack was dragging.

Wise-Defender opened it and pulled out the three paddles she had been lugging, and then took the three others from Max's pack. Terry stood on one foot at a time and leaned on Max while Wise-Defender tied paddles to her ankles with wide strips of rawhide.

Max saw that they were snowshoes. He helped Wise-Defender tie a pair on himself, and then Wise-Defender helped Max.

The sacks were lighter now, and the three of them could walk across the snow as if it were a carpet. They followed the path to the Leni-Lenape village. Singing-Moon and Blackbird-on-the-Wing were so happy to see them that they ran to tell the news to everyone.

The big drum started to beat. The people danced till the snow was pounded flat. They were still singing when Max and Terry fell asleep.

When Max woke, he caught sight of his sneakers, T-shirt, and shorts under the bench he had been sleeping on.

Suddenly Max felt like putting on his old clothes. After he was dressed, he shook his sister. Terry sat up and stared at him.

“Why are you wearing your shorts?” she asked.

“I don’t know,” Max said. “I was just thinking about the sweat lodge. This would be a good time to explore it. Everyone’s asleep.”

Max handed Terry her old clothes. “Put these on. We won’t need our deerskin clothing now.”

Terry changed into her shirt, shorts, and red sneakers. She followed Max out of the little house and through the sleeping village to the sweat lodge. Max lifted the dome off the hole and went after Terry down a set of steps to the lodge below.

No steaming leaves were here now. The clay floor was swept clean. The ceiling was too low for them to stand, and somehow they couldn’t find the steps they had come in by.

There must be another entrance to the lodge. They made their way toward a faint green glow, which seemed to be at the end of a long tunnel.

At last Terry and Max crawled out into bright sunshine. They turned to look at the tunnel, but it was gone.

They were in their own yard. The back door of the house opened. Their mother and father came out.

Mr. Robertson looked at Max and Terry. “Your mother was worried about leaving you alone, but I see we weren’t gone long enough for you kids to get into trouble.”

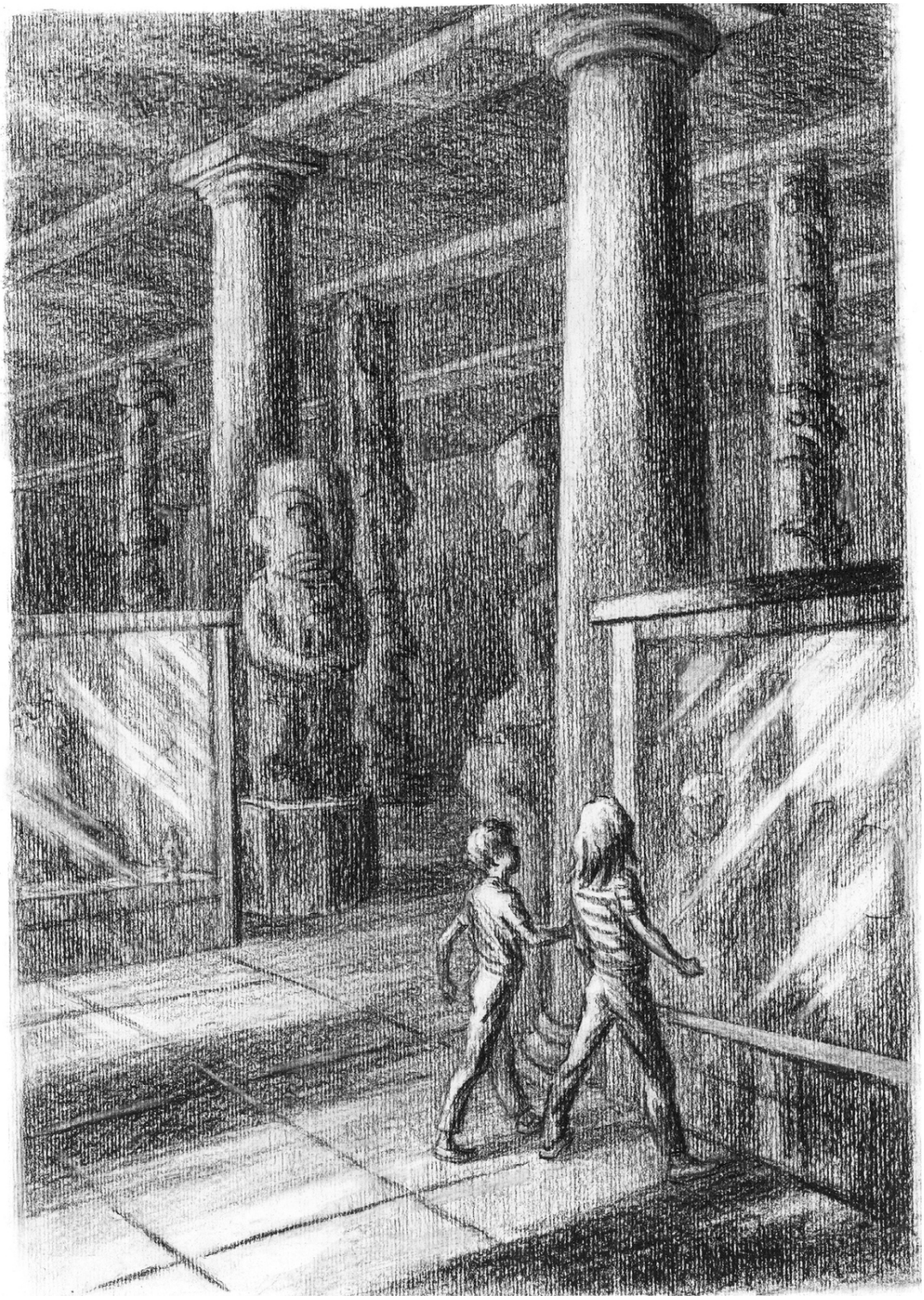
“Your dad changed his mind about building a wall when he found out how much it would cost,” Mrs. Robertson told them.

“I’m going to build a stockade fence instead,” Mr. Robertson said.

RUTH CHEW

MAGIC OF THE BLACK MIRROR

Illustrated by the Author



“Coming in here was a great idea, Mandy. It was awfully hot in the park.”

Will Corrigan looked around. “Wow! What a high ceiling!”

“Maybe that’s why this room is so nice and cool,” Amanda said.

Will walked over to a large glass case. “Look at these things.”

His sister stared at a little fringed leather skirt in the case. For a minute she didn’t speak. Then she said in a low voice, “Will, I just thought of something weird!”

“What do you mean?” her brother asked.

“Think about it, Will. Every one of these things belonged to an Indian long ago,” Amanda told him.

Will scratched his head. “You’re right. It *is* kind of spooky. I guess that’s a real moccasin next to the tomahawk over there.” He turned and looked hard at his sister. “Mandy, did you know this stuff was here?”

Amanda grinned. “I thought you’d like it. We all did.”

“You mean,” Will said, “you’ve been to the Brooklyn Museum before?”

“Mrs. Coleman brought our class here last spring,” Amanda told her brother. “Isn’t it a great place?”

Will moved to the next case. “There’s more Indian stuff here, but this is different.”

“These things were made by another set of Indians. They lived on the plains.” Amanda was two years older than Will. It was fun to show off how much she knew about Indians.

On one side of the room there were five enormous wooden poles. They were covered with carvings of birds and people and animals, one on top of

the other. All the carvings had big eyes and big beaks or mouths. Most of them had heads that seemed too large for their bodies.

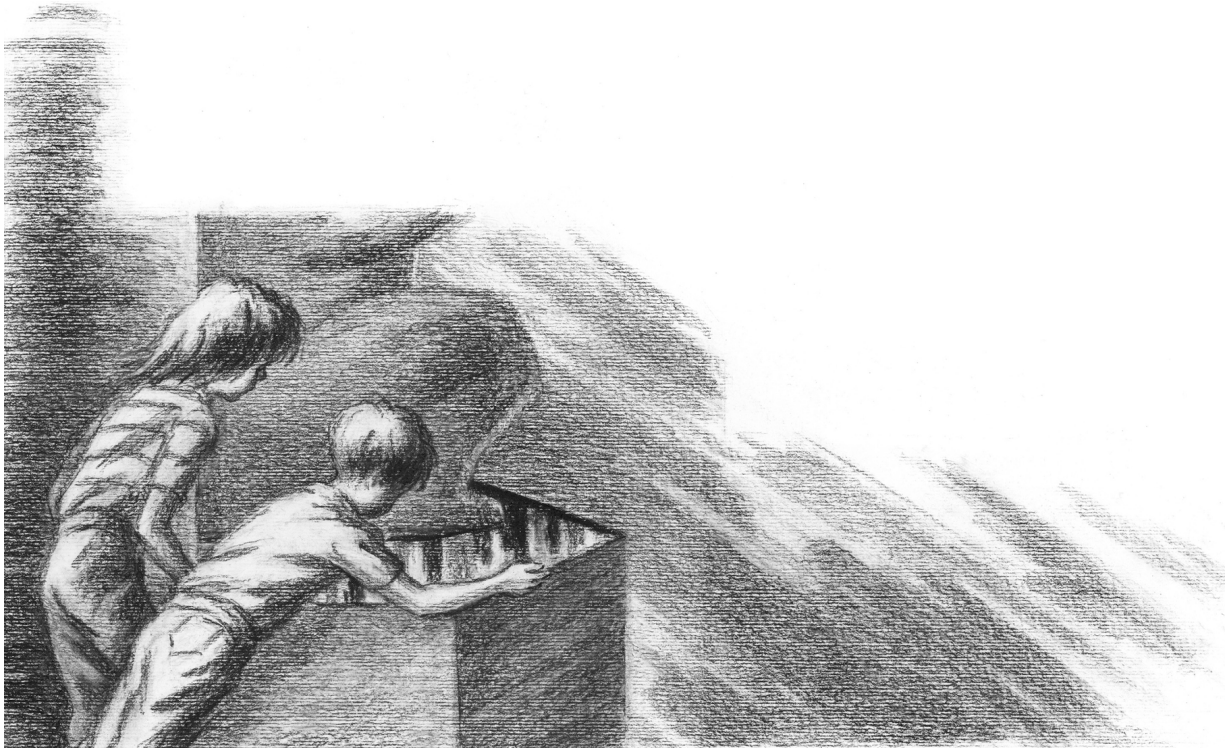
“Totem poles!” Will went over to look at them.

Amanda ran after her brother.

Will was staring up at the totem poles. Now something else caught his eye. “Hey, look at those! Wow!” He ran to the center of the room. Four giant wooden statues stood on tall stands. The stands were right in front of stone pillars that reached to the ceiling.

Will climbed on the base of the nearest pillar. From here he could see the top of a stand that held one of the wooden statues. “What do you know? There’s a mirror here!”

Will leaned far over and looked down into the mirror. “Mandy, this is *really* weird!”



Her brother kept staring down into the mirror. Amanda climbed up beside him to see what was so interesting. “It’s a black mirror,” she said.

The mirror showed the beautiful carving on the statue’s underside, but everything around the statue in the mirror seemed dark and strange. Amanda thought she could see trees and water. Suddenly the air smelled salty, and she could hear gulls screaming. It made her think of Coney Island.

Amanda took a deep breath and looked up. There was the big wooden statue, but it looked quite different now.

The statue wasn’t old and cracked anymore. It was painted red and black and looked almost new. And there was no sign of the stone pillar.

Will grabbed his sister’s arm. “Mandy,” he whispered. “We’re not in the museum anymore!”

2

Secretly Amanda was glad to have her brother beside her, but she didn't want him to know she was afraid.

"What's happened to us, Mandy?" Will asked.

Amanda thought hard. "Somehow we must have gotten into magic," she told him.

Will was quiet for a little while. Then he said, “I always thought magic would be fun, but it’s scary.”

Amanda looked around. High overhead sea birds were flying in wide circles. She felt sand under her feet. A gray sea slapped against the rocky shore.

“Look, Will,” she said. “Aren’t those houses?”

Will shaded his eyes against the afternoon sunlight and looked down the beach. “Maybe they’re sheds or boat houses. I don’t see any windows, but there are some more carved poles.”

Across the water Amanda could see woods and a mountain. “This must be a bay. What a beautiful place!”

The mountain was very different from the rolling green mountains where Amanda and Will had gone to camp last summer.

This mountain poked a rocky point out of a thick forest of tall, dark green trees. Soft clouds drifted around it.

A cool breeze was blowing from the water.

“I don’t know where we are,” Will said, “but I like it here. It’s just as cool as it was in the museum.”

Along the shore the trees were bright green and smaller than the forest trees.

Amanda pointed at a patch of scraggly bushes. “Will, I think those are raspberries!”

“What are we waiting for?” Will raced across the sand. Amanda ran after him.

Will stared at the berries on the bushes. “They’re bigger than raspberries, and they’re orange. I wonder if they’re good to eat.” He reached out to pick one.

Before Will could touch the berry, the two children heard a voice yell, “Stop!”

3

“You’d better not touch those berries!” A boy wearing only a shirt of woven fiber stepped from behind a willow tree.

“Oh!” Amanda tried not to stare at him. “Will they poison us?”

The boy seemed to be older than Will, but not quite as old as Amanda. He looked at them with bright, dark eyes. Then he laughed. “Where have you been all your lives? Don’t you know you can’t pick berries from somebody else’s patch?”

“We didn’t know anybody owned this land,” Will said.

“This berry patch belongs to the family of our neighbor, Crooked Toe Eagle. I don’t want him to think I’ve been taking his berries. He’s so greedy he’d probably claim the right to take fish from our stream.” The boy was looking at Will’s and Amanda’s clothes now. “You’re strangers. What are your names?”

“I’m Amanda,” she told him. “And this is my brother, Will.”

The boy pushed a strand of straight black hair out of his eyes. “I’ve never heard those names before. What do they mean?”

“Mom said my name is short for William and means ‘bold defender,’ and Mandy’s name means ‘lovable’—which she isn’t always.” Will grinned.

“What’s your name?” Amanda asked.

“Fox-of-the-Water,” the boy said.

“Why did your parents give you such a name?” Will wanted to know.

“It was my mother’s grandfather’s name. He died before I was born,” Fox-of-the-Water told them.

“Mandy’s named after Mom’s grandmother,” Will said. “But why did your great-grandfather have a name like that?”

“He was named after an uncle who died before he was born. It’s an old family name. Long ago someone was saved from drowning by one of the fox people. There’s a song about it that we sometimes sing.”

Fox-of-the-Water looked at the sun. “It’s getting late,” he said. “I ought to be working now. If you want berries, come and help me pick our salmon berries. They’re just as good as these of old Crooked Toe Eagle.” He went back to the willow tree.

“Mandy,” Will whispered, “he’s just like the picture of an Indian I saw in my social studies book.”

Amanda nodded. “I know the picture you mean. It’s in the chapter on totem poles.”

The two children stared at each other. Suddenly Amanda remembered. “The book said this was how the Totem Pole Indians looked long ago!”

Neither Will nor Amanda spoke, but now they both knew what had happened.

The black mirror in the museum had taken them into the past!

4

Fox-of-the-Water pulled a large basket from behind the willow tree. “My mother told me to fill this with berries.”

Will and Amanda went over to look at the basket.

“Wow! Where are you going to find enough berries to fill anything this size?” Will wanted to know. “And how will you ever pick them all?”

“We’d better get started. Where’s your berry patch?” Amanda asked.

“Follow me.” The Indian boy tied the basket on his back. He started walking swiftly along the stony beach.

Amanda and Will came after him. They were wearing sneakers, but they had a hard time keeping up with the barefoot Indian.

The three children came to a big cedar log lying on the beach. Someone must have been cutting into it. Patches of the bark had been peeled off, and bits of wood were scattered around.

Fox-of-the-Water took off the basket. He walked slowly around the log and picked up three short, wide pieces of wood. Then he sat down on a rock and used the bone knife hanging around his neck to split one end of each piece into five strips.

“I thought you were in a hurry to get the berries picked, Fox-of-the-Water,” Will said. “Why are you wasting time whittling?”

Fox-of-the-Water didn’t answer. Instead he went over to the fallen log and began to peel off a long piece of the soft inner bark.

Amanda saw that he was making something. “Fox-of-the-Water,” she said, “what can I do to help?”

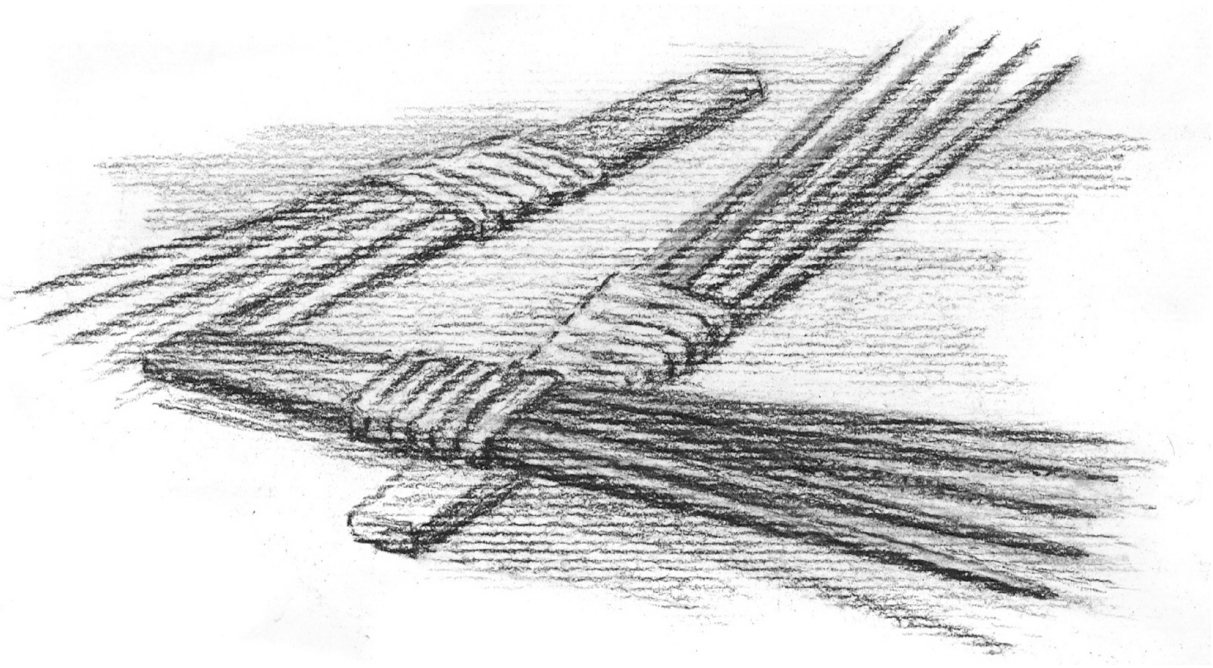
The Indian boy smiled. “Hold this while I work. Roll it up as I cut it away from the tree.” He handed her the end of the piece of bark. “Be careful not to tear it.” He went back to pulling the bark from the log.

When Fox-of-the-Water had a long piece of bark, he cut it off. Amanda rolled it up.

Will helped Amanda roll the bark back and forth to make it stronger. The Indian boy cut the bark into three narrow strings and used them to bind the unsplit end of each piece of wood to hold it together.

After that Fox-of-the-Water stuck bits of wood between the strips to spread them apart like the fingers of a hand. He started to sharpen the points.

“Mandy,” Will whispered, “what do you think he’s going to do with those things?”



Fox-of-the-Water dropped one of the spiky wooden things he had made into his basket and handed the other two to Amanda and Will.

“Thank you.” Amanda stared at the five sharp points. “What do you use it for?”

“Don’t you know a berry picker when you see one?” The Indian boy put the basket on his back and began trotting down the beach again.

Will and Amanda raced after him. They went around a curve of the shore and came to a little stream that trickled out of a tangle of broken bushes and flowed across the sand into the bay.

Fox-of-the-Water stepped into the shallow stream and started wading into the center of the clump of bushes.

Amanda and Will pulled off their sneakers and socks, hung them around their necks, and followed the young Indian.

He stepped out of the stream at a place where the bushes were loaded with the same kind of big orange raspberries that Will and Amanda had seen earlier.

“I wonder why these bushes have so many berries on them,” Will said. “I didn’t see any a minute ago.”

“Aunt Snow Rainbow and my cousins were picking here yesterday,” Fox-of-the-Water told him. “They left these bushes for me.” He took a mat of woven bark out of the basket and unrolled it on the ground. Then he began to rip branches off the bushes and pile them onto the mat.

“I thought you were going to pick the berries,” Amanda said.

“First I have to lay all the branches with berries on this mat,” the Indian boy told her. “If you’re hungry, eat a few now. Then you can help me.”

Will and Amanda each tasted a berry.

“Yum,” Amanda said. She started pulling off branches and putting them on the mat.

Will was stacking branches now, too. Now and then he pulled off a berry to eat it. “Not bad. I was afraid they’d taste like fish. They must be called salmon berries because of the color.”

Amanda was afraid it would get dark before they finished. She set to work to strip the bushes clean of branches.

When every branch with berries was on the mat, Fox-of-the-Water showed Will and Amanda how to whip the branches one at a time with their berry pickers. This knocked the berries onto the mat.

When the mat was covered, the three children picked it up and poured the berries into the basket.

“Now I have to go home,” the Indian boy told them. “Where are you going?”

Amanda thought for a moment. Then she said, “Fox-of-the-Water, we don’t know where we’re going.”

“We don’t even know where we are,” Will told him.

Fox-of-the-Water looked hard at the two children. “Did someone bring you here against your will?”

“We didn’t ask to come here, if that’s what you mean,” Amanda told him.

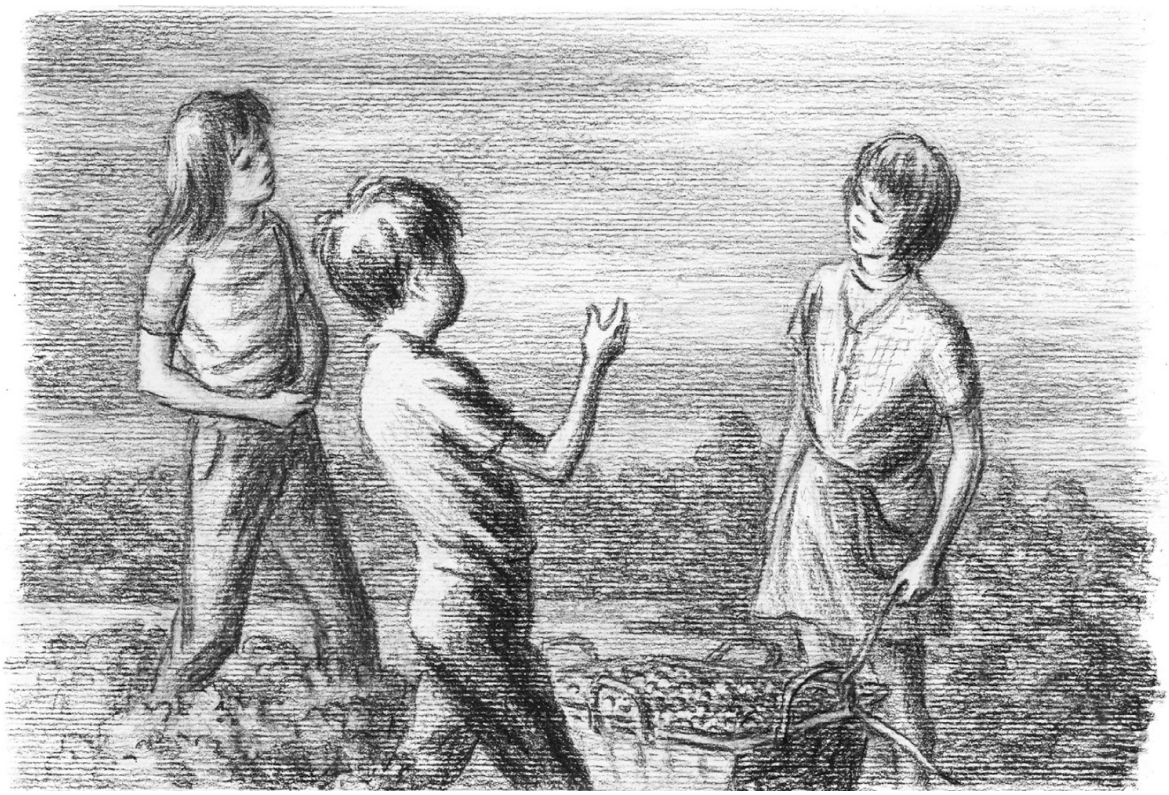
“What’s more,” Will put in, “we don’t know how we got here.”

“Oh!” the Indian boy said in a low voice. “You’re *lost*!” He looked as if he thought this was even worse than either Will or Amanda thought it was.

Fox-of-the-Water bit his lip as if to keep from crying.

Amanda put her arm around his shoulders to comfort him. “We’ll be all right, Fox-of-the-Water.”

“I can tell that you and your brother don’t know how to take care of yourselves in my country,” the Indian boy told her. “You don’t even know how to pick berries.



“I could take you to my uncle’s house,” he said. “I live there with my mother and father. It’s a big house. There’s plenty of room.”

Still, Fox-of-the-Water looked worried. “I never asked you what clan you belong to,” he said.

“Clan? What’s that?” Will asked.

The Indian stared at him. “Don’t your people set up poles?”

“Flagpoles,” Will told him. “Dad put one in front of our porch. Next to the school there’s a big tall one.”

“Well,” Fox-of-the-Water said, “what creature is carved on top of the poles?”

“Creature?” Will looked puzzled.

Amanda interrupted. “The only creature you ever see on a flagpole where we live is an eagle.”

“An eagle?” Fox-of-the-Water said, as if he couldn’t believe his ears.

“Yes,” Will agreed. “Never anything but an eagle!”

The young Indian smiled. “Then everything is all right. My family are Eagles.” He put the basket on his back. “Come along.”

Fox-of-the-Water stepped into the little stream and started wading through the broken berry bushes. Will and Amanda followed him. When they came to the beach, they put on their socks and sneakers.

The Indian didn’t walk so fast now.

“We’d better take turns carrying the basket,” Amanda said.

Will helped her lift it off the Indian boy’s back and slip her arms through the straps. Amanda carried the basket to the fallen cedar log. Then Will took his turn.

Soon they could see the row of houses along the shore. The first one they came to was very small. Someone was standing in the doorway.

Fox-of-the-Water whispered, “Don’t stare at the saya-gay. He might put a spell on you!”

A small man with a long gray beard and long gray hair worn in a big knot on top of his head stepped out of the little house. “You are late coming home, Fox-of-the-Water. You should not worry Sunset Moon this way.”

Fox-of-the-Water looked at the ground. “I’m sorry, Bright Star,” he said. “I didn’t mean to worry my mother.”

Will put the heavy basket on the ground.

The old man bent over it. “Salmon berries! My favorite!” He went into his hut and came out with a wooden bowl.

Fox-of-the-Water quickly filled the bowl with berries. “I want you to meet my clansfolk, Mandy and Will.”

Bright Star looked at the T-shirts and blue jeans and sneakers that the two children were wearing. He was dressed in a soft leather shirt and pants.

Will and Amanda tried hard not to stare at him, but the old man had the longest fingernails they had ever seen. He wore a necklace of bone-and-copper beads and what Will thought must have been bear teeth. The strangest thing of all was the long, thin bone through his nose.

Bright Star looked first into Amanda’s eyes and then into Will’s. He passed his hand across his eyes. “You two have seen things I do not understand, but you are good at heart.”

He turned to the Indian boy. “You are right to make friends with these young people. You have more sense than I thought, Fox-of-the-Water. Now, go home. Sunset Moon is afraid you have had the bad luck to meet some land-otter people!”

“Thank you, Bright Star.” Fox-of-the-Water picked up the basket and walked as fast as he could. Will and Amanda marched alongside.

“Who was that, Fox-of-the-Water?” Amanda asked.

“The saya-gay of our village. He heals the sick and tells us how to stay friends with the salmon people and the bear people and others. The saya-gay is very wise, but you must be careful not to annoy him. He has powerful charms that he could use against you.”

“Sounds like a witch doctor,” Will whispered in his sister’s ear.

“Sh-sh!” Amanda changed the subject. “Who are the land-otter people?” she asked the Indian boy.

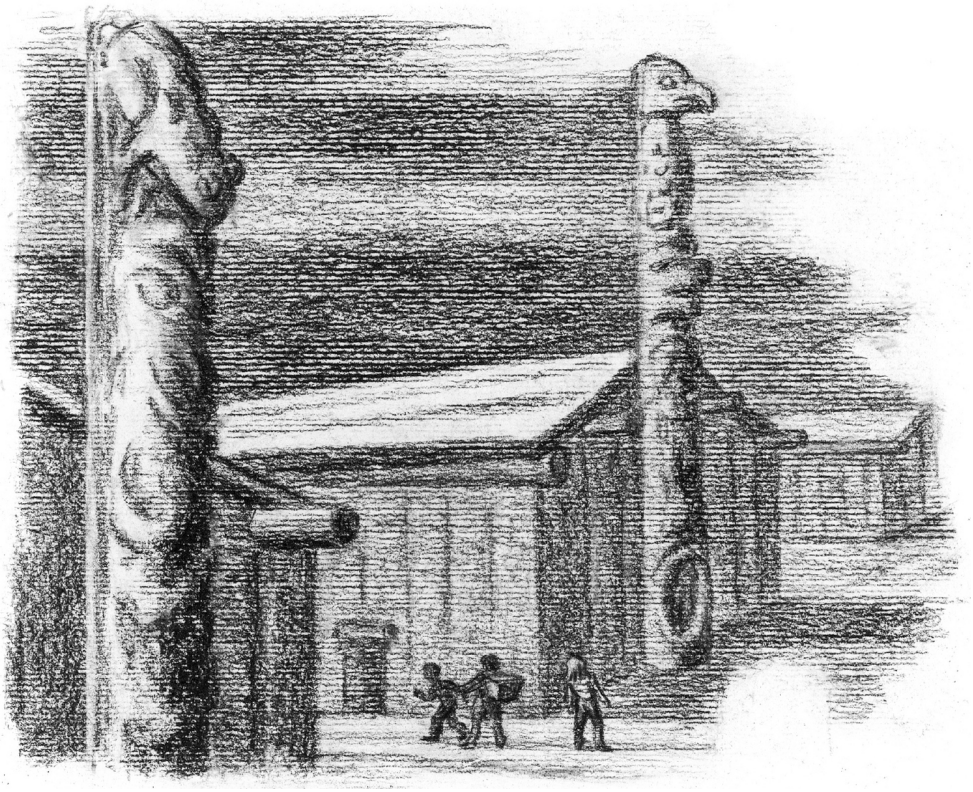
“They’re the spirits of the land otters when they want to look like people,” Fox-of-she-Water told her. “We have to stay clear of them. They’re very tricky. They hate us and are always ready to harm us.”

“Have you ever seen them?” Will wanted to know.

“No, but my mother has a friend whose grandmother met one in the woods early one morning. After that she couldn’t speak.” Fox-of-the-Water looked around.

The sky was getting darker. A chill wind blew from the bay. The young Indian began to walk faster.

6



The stars were out by the time the three children came to a large house built of wide cedar boards. A red-and-black totem pole stood in front of it, facing the sea. “This place belongs to Crooked Toe Eagle,” Fox-of-the-Water said.

The next house was even bigger. Amanda saw that there was an eagle carved on the top of the painted totem pole at the front of the house. “This must be where you live, Fox-of-the-Water.”

The Indian smiled. “Yes,” he said. “Come inside. It is the house of my uncle, Mountain Echo.”

Will started to walk to a door in the side of the house. Fox-of-the-Water grabbed his arm. “Don’t go in there!” he ordered. “That’s only for slaves. Follow me.” The Indian boy walked around to the front of the totem pole.

Did you hear that, Mandy? Will whispered.

Amanda nodded. “I don’t like it,” she said in a low voice.

Fox-of-the-Water turned to look back at them. “What’s keeping you two? I want you to meet my family. Come along!” He carried the basket of berries through an archway cut into the pole.

Will looked at Amanda. She kept her chin high and stood as tall and straight as she could. Then she walked through the round doorway into the house. Will came after her.

They stepped down into a big room. There were three cooking fires, each with a group of people sitting on the ground near it. Another fire burned in the corner of the room where the roof was highest. There was a smoke hole over this fire.

A woman in a shirt and skirt of woven bark ran across the room. “Fox-of-the-Water, where have you been? You’re supposed to be home before dark!”

Fox-of-the-Water took the basket off his back and held it out. He grinned. “Remember, Sunset Moon, you told me I had to pick all the berries Aunt Snow Rainbow left.”

His mother looked into the basket. “I didn’t think you could do it. I was angry with you for going fishing instead of helping your cousins pick berries this morning.” Sunset Moon looked up and saw Amanda and Will. For a moment she just stared at them.

Amanda thought she looked scared.

“It’s all right.” Fox-of-the-Water put the basket down. “These are my friends, Mandy and Will. They’re Eagles, and they helped me pick the berries.”

Sunset Moon laughed. “Now I know how you did it!” She smiled at Will and Amanda. “Thank you and welcome.”

A tall man with a red-and-black tattoo on his chest walked over. “This is my father, Brave Warrior,” Fox-of-the-Water told them.

“We are glad to have you with us,” Brave Warrior said. “You must be hungry. Come and have some supper.”

Amanda and Will followed him to a cooking fire on the other side of the big room.

Supper was the strangest meal either Amanda or Will had ever eaten, but they were so hungry that it tasted wonderful.

Sunset Moon handed each of them a wooden bowl and bone spoon. She used a dipper made of shell to fill the bowls with chunks of stewed fish from one square wooden box and stewed roots from another.

A woman was picking hot stones from the fire with two long, flat sticks. She dropped the stones into the boxes to keep the stew warm.

The three children sat on the ground to eat. Fox-of-the-Water showed Will and Amanda how to dip the fish and the roots into a bowl of sweet oil.

Sunset Moon had put the big basket of salmon berries down beside them. Fox-of-the-Water dipped the berries into the oil, too. Amanda tried this and decided to eat her berries plain. Will said he liked his dipped in oil, but Amanda thought he was only pretending to dunk.

Both Will and Amanda saw that the people here did not wear much clothing.

Nobody spoke to the woman who was putting the hot stones into the boxes.

There were other people in the room who were busy working. They were spoken to only when something needed to be done.

“Fox-of-the-Water,” Amanda whispered, “what’s the name of the lady over there by the fire?”

“I don’t know,” he said. “She’s only a slave.”

Will heard this. “She has to use the side door! Is she being punished for something, Fox-of-the-Water?”

The young Indian thought for a minute. “She made the mistake of letting herself be captured.”

“I don’t understand,” Amanda told him.

“When we need help with our work,” Fox-of-the-Water said, “the men make a raid on another village to capture slaves. Sometimes our men are hurt or killed. When things go well, they bring back slaves. Of course, if a captive is a member of one of the clans in our village, we have to pay for any damage and return the captive.”

Now Will and Amanda knew why Fox-of-the-Water was so happy to think that they belonged to the Eagle clan. He didn’t want them to be made slaves!

Fox-of-the-Water pointed to the other cooking fires. “Those belong to the families of my aunts and cousins. The one under the smoke hole is the household fire. We never let that go out. In winter it’s much bigger.”

Will showed Amanda rows of fish hanging from racks high over the fires.

“I guess that’s how they smoke the fish,” she said.

Suddenly Fox-of-the-Water jumped to his feet. “Stand up!” he whispered. “My uncle, Mountain Echo, is coming.”

19

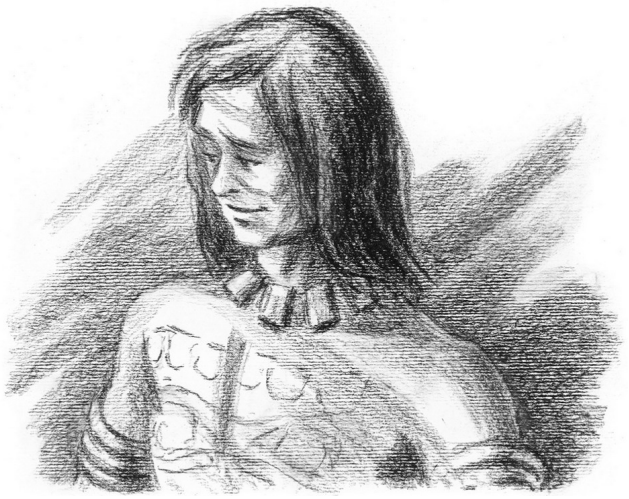
Amanda saw an Indian wearing copper rings on his arms and legs coming toward them. There were tattoos on the backs of his hands and on his chest.

Sunset Moon and Brave Warrior left their places near the cooking fire and went to greet the owner of the house. They walked with him to where the three children were standing.

“Good evening, Fox-of-the-Water,” his uncle said.

“Good evening, Mountain Echo,” the Indian boy answered. “I want you to meet my friends, Mandy and Will. They are Eagles from a strange country.”

“Thank you for letting us come to your house,” Amanda said.



“We’ve never seen anything like it,” Will told him.

Mountain Echo smiled. He had a strong but gentle face. “I believe you.” He touched Will’s T-shirt. “And I have never seen clothes like yours.” He

looked at Will and then at Amanda. “You are welcome to stay with us.” He turned to Sunset Moon. “Sister, our guests will need sleeping mats and blankets. If you do not have enough, there are some stored under my sleeping platform.”

Mountain Echo stroked the top of Fox-of-the-Water’s head. He smiled again and walked back to the rear of the house.

The people in the room had finished eating. They all took their bowls and spoons outside and scrubbed them with sand from the beach. Fox-of-the-Water showed Amanda and Will where his family’s dishes were stored under a raised platform that ran along the inside wall of the house.

The walls were hung with mats made of rushes stitched together with cattail fiber. Finer mats of soft inner cedar bark divided the big room into sections for each family.

Sunset Moon gave Amanda and Will each a sleeping mat and a blanket of some sort of wool.

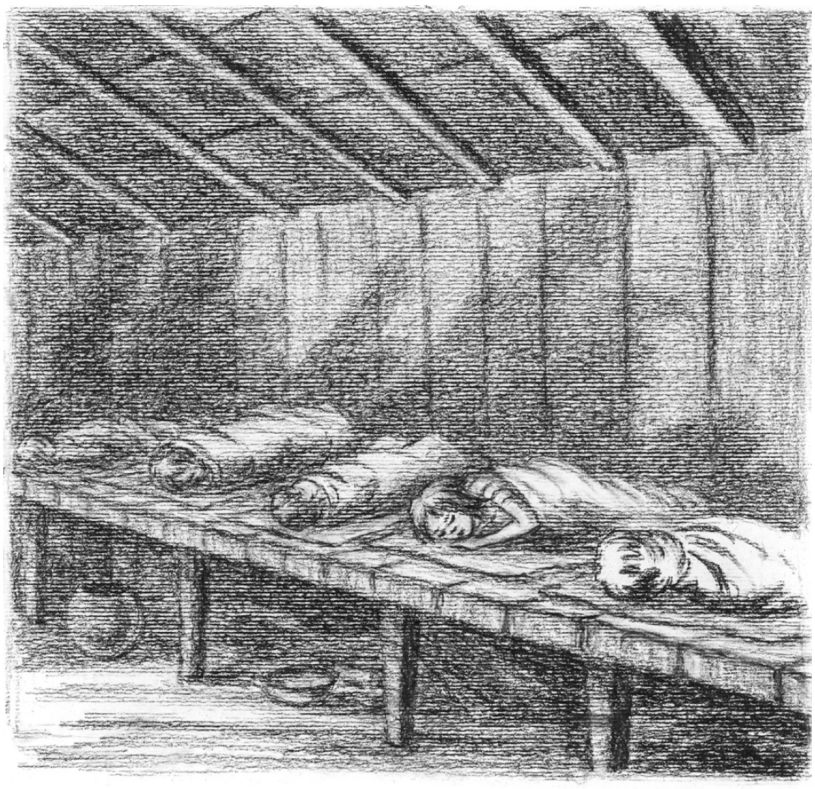
Will spread his sleeping mat on the wooden platform next to where Fox-of-the-Water was already asleep. Amanda put her mat beside his.

Will lay down and rolled himself up in his blanket. “Mandy,” he whispered, “this isn’t bad at all.”

The mats were made of two layers of rushes crowded together so tightly that they were bouncy.

Amanda took off her sneakers and curled up under the blanket. Everybody else in the big room seemed to be asleep now, even her brother. The fires were still burning. They were very low, but they cast strange flickering shadows everywhere in the big room.

Amanda wondered if this were all a dream and she would wake up tomorrow in her own bed in Brooklyn. She was much too tired to think about it, and in half a minute she was fast asleep.



Amanda woke to the sound of singing. She opened her eyes. At first she didn’t know where she was. It seemed to be a large, dimly lit room.

Then Amanda remembered what had happened yesterday. She sat up. The fires still burned with a dull red glow, but now a little daylight was shining through the smoke hole in the roof.

Amanda looked around for her brother. She couldn’t see him anywhere. Her heart started to pound, but she took a deep breath and tried to pretend she wasn’t scared.

She put on her sneakers and rolled up her blanket in her sleeping mat. All the other mats were stored out of sight under the platform. Amanda put her bedding there, too.

The singing seemed to be coming from outdoors. Amanda crossed the room to the big arched doorway. She had to step up to go out into the morning sunshine.

The bay was crowded with boats. They were different sizes, but they were all hollowed out of cedar logs. The people in the boats were singing. And all the other people of the village were standing barefoot on the beach and singing, too. The sky was blue, and the sea was sparkling. Most of the children had no clothes on now. They were dripping wet and must have been swimming.

Will was next to Fox-of-the-Water, listening to the words of the song. It was about a time long ago when animals and people and spirits could change places. Almost everybody seemed to know the words and was singing loudly. They all looked as if they were having a wonderful time.

When the song ended, Amanda went to join the two boys. “Why didn’t you wake me?”

“Fox-of-the-Water was in a rush to join in the singing,” Will said. “And I wanted to see what was going on.”

Amanda didn’t want to admit how frightened she had been. She listened as the singers sang three more songs. Then some of them paddled away in their dugout canoes. Others went off to work or to eat.

There were cooking fires burning outdoors now. Will and Amanda followed Fox-of-the-Water to where Sunset Moon was pouring the salmon berries from the berry basket into a wooden box in which water was boiling. The slave woman was adding more hot stones to the water.

Fox-of-the-Water handed bowls and spoons to Amanda and Will. “Take what you want from those.” He pointed to more wooden boxes near the fire.

The food was a lot like what they had eaten the night before, but it was fresh and good-tasting. And it was fun to eat breakfast in the open air.

When they had finished eating, Sunset Moon handed each of the three children a round basket. She smiled at Amanda. “Please don’t let Fox-of-the-Water go fishing until he brings me fresh water.”

12

Fox-of-the-Water led the way back along the beach where they had walked the day before.

"What will we put the water in?" Will asked him.

The Indian waved the basket he was carrying. "In these, of course."

"I never knew baskets could hold water," Amanda said.

"They're easier to carry than wooden boxes," Fox-of-the-Water told her.

The children came to the little house where the saya-gay lived. Bright Star was sitting on the wooden platform in front of his house. He was busy

making something and didn’t seem to notice them. Fox-of-the-Water put his finger to his lips and tiptoed around the house to reach a path into the woods.

The path led through a grove of trees with tiny green crab apples on them. In sunny spots between the trees Amanda saw patches of big purple clover.

They walked until they came to a line of willow trees growing on the bank of a creek. Fox-of-the-Water leaned over to fill his basket with water. Amanda and Will filled theirs, too.

The three children picked up the water baskets and were about to turn around and go back the way they had come. They looked up and saw something leaning over the creek.

It was a mother bear! And beside her were two little cubs.

The children stayed as still as they could, hoping the bears had not seen them.

The mother bear was staring down into the creek. The three children saw her reach into the water. A second later the bear had a big fish in her long, sharp claws. She threw it onto the bank and turned around to eat it. Both the two little bears tried to get a bite of the fish at the same time. Their mother growled and pushed them away.

When she had eaten all that she wanted, the big bear turned away from the fish and left it for her cubs to finish. She sniffed the air.

At once all the hair on the bear’s back stood on end. She looked around and caught sight of the children. Her little eyes seemed to glow red.

Keeping between her cubs and the children, the bear began to move closer.

None of the children wanted to run away and leave the others behind.

Amanda swung her water basket and splashed the bear in the face. This only made the bear angrier. She stood up on her hind legs and made a dive for Amanda.

At this moment there was a loud rattling noise. Amanda was so startled that she slipped on a patch of damp moss and fell in front of the bear.

13

At any moment Amanda expected to feel the sharp claws or the teeth of the bear. Instead she heard that rattling noise and the sound of laughter.

She looked up to see the black bear running into the woods after her frightened cubs. A strange creature with the head of a fish was chasing the bears. The fish creature was shaking a rattle and laughing at the same time.

Amanda stood up. She saw her brother and the Indian boy standing side by side with their mouths open. Amanda thought they looked like fish, too. She began to laugh and couldn’t stop.

Fox-of-the-Water whispered, “Be careful! Nobody laughs at the saya-gay!”

The bear and her cubs went crashing through the underbrush toward the deeper woods away from the shore. Then the witch doctor turned around and came back to the children.

He took off the carved wooden mask he was wearing. “I just finished making this for the Welcome Salmon Day, and I wanted to show it to somebody. It’s lucky that I came here.” He looked at the sky. “The Power of the Shining Heavens must be watching over you.”

“Thank you for chasing away the bear, Bright Star.” Amanda looked at the mask. She saw that the fish’s eyes were made of pearly shell and the mask was painted black and red. She smiled at the saya-gay. “It’s a wonderful fish, Bright Star. I’m sure the salmon will like it.”

Bright Star smiled back at her. In spite of the bone he wore in his nose, Amanda thought he had a nice face. “That sort of bear is usually timid,” the witch doctor told her. “This one was trying to protect her babies. And she knew that you were afraid of her. If she had been one of those fierce bears, I couldn’t have scared her away so easily.” He turned to the boys. “I think Sunset Moon must have asked you to fetch water. She won’t like to be kept waiting.”

“You saved Mandy’s life, Bright Star. Thank you.” Will held out his hand.

The witch doctor held the fish mask and the rattle with one hand and took hold of Will’s hand with the other. “You do not know how happy this has made me,” the witch doctor said.

Fox-of-the-Water bowed. “My family is in your debt, Bright Star.”

“It is an honor, Fox-of-the-Water.” The saya-gay bowed. “I must return to my work.” He walked back toward his house.

Amanda picked up her water basket and filled it from the creek.

“You were both very brave,” Fox-of-the-Water said.

“We weren’t any braver than you,” Amanda reminded him. “Bright Star was the brave one.”

“Bright Star has magic power over animals—and over people, too,” the young Indian told them. “I would not have the courage to laugh or even

smile at him. Nor would anyone here. And I would never be brave enough to touch his hand the way you do!”

14

The three children walked as fast as they could with the heavy baskets of water. Sunset Moon was waiting for them beside her outdoor cooking fire.

The salmon berries had been stewed to a mush and were now spread out on mats to dry in the sun.

Sunset Moon put the baskets of water in a shady place near the wall of the house. She handed Fox-of-the-Water a strange basket that looked like a long tube with a funnel at one end.

“You take one end and let Will hold the other,” Sunset Moon said. “Mandy, do you think you can carry the burden basket?”

“Yes,” Mandy said, wondering what the burden basket was like.

Sunset Moon strapped a basket with a flat bottom to Mandy’s back. “Good fishing!” She went back to her work by the fire.

“Why didn’t you tell your mother about the bear?” Amanda asked the Indian boy.

“I’m supposed to watch out for bears. I didn’t want to be punished.” Fox-of-the-Water led the way along the beach. He held the wide end of the long, skinny basket. Will had the narrow end. Amanda came after with the burden basket on her back.

When they came near the saya-gay’s house, they saw the witch doctor talking to an old woman. He was holding a box of carved and polished black stone.

Bright Star scooped out three handfuls of dried plants from his stone box and dropped them into a wooden bowl the woman had in her hand. “Stir these into a very little water and put them on your aches. They will make your skin feel hot, but the pain will go. Save these herbs and use them whenever you need them.”

The woman bowed low and went away, carrying her bowl.

The saya-gay walked over to the children.

“Where did you get the beautiful box?” Mandy asked.

Bright Star smiled. “I made it. I’m always looking for pieces of this kind of rock. If you find any, let me know.” He looked at the long, skinny basket the boys were carrying. “Where are you going to fish?”

“In the little stream Mountain Echo gave to Brave Warrior last winter,” Fox-of-the-Water told him.

“I wish you luck.” The medicine man went back to his house.

Fox-of-the-Water walked faster. Will had to hurry to keep up. Amanda marched after them.

15

The Indian boy turned away from the beach and went into the woods. Amanda couldn’t see a path, but he seemed to know where he was going. The farther they went from the shore, the deeper the woods became. Amanda looked hard at every shadow. She didn’t want to meet another bear.

The trees were different from the ones at the shore. They were much taller, and they were evergreens. Thick moss made a carpet on the ground and covered the branches overhead.

Fox-of-the-Water walked slowly. He seemed to be listening.

Amanda was beginning to think they were lost when she heard the splash and gurgle of a stream.

“Here we are!” Fox-of-the-Water said. The dark branches of the trees did not meet above the little stream. The blue sky could be seen here, and the rippling water sparkled in the sun.

Fox-of-the-Water stepped into the stream.

Will put down his end of the long, skinny basket and took off his socks and sneakers. Amanda slipped out of the straps of the burden basket and set it down. By the time her feet were bare, both boys were in the stream with the basket tube.

Amanda waded into the cool water and went to help them.

Fox-of-the-Water placed the wide end of the basket downstream. He showed Will and Amanda how to put sticks and underbrush across the stream on either side of the long tube so the fish could not swim upstream, except through the tube.

The Indian Boy climbed out of the water and began to walk along the bank. Amanda and Will went after him.

The stream became wider and deeper. Fox-of-the-Water cut three leafy branches from a bush. He gave one to Amanda and one to Will. With the third he started to whip the water of the stream.

“What are you doing?” Will asked.

“Trying to scare the fish, of course,” Fox-of-the-Water told him.

Will and Amanda rolled their jean legs high over their knees and waded into the water, beating it with the leafy branches. They followed Fox-of-the-Water back up the stream to where they had left the fish trap.

The Indian boy leaned over the long tube and peeked through the basketwork. He picked up the wide funnel end and started to drag the heavy fish trap to the shore of the stream. Amanda and Will helped him lift it onto the mossy bank, where Amanda had left the burden basket.

Now Will looked into the trap. “Wow!”

Fox-of-the-Water placed the wide end of the tube in the burden basket and held it steady while Amanda and Will lifted the narrow end into the air.

The tube was full of fish. There was no room in it for them to turn around and swim out. The children dumped them out, tail-first, into the flat-bottomed basket.

Amanda tried to pick it up. “We won’t be able to carry all these. Let’s put the little ones back.”

“Not these.” Fox-of-the-Water held up a slender, silvery fish. “Sunset Moon uses them to make oil.” He chose all the fish he wanted to keep. Will

and Amanda let the others go free in the stream.

“I’m hungry,” Fox-of-the-Water said.

“So am I,” Amanda told him.

“Me too.” Will looked around. “I see blueberries over there. Are we allowed to eat them?”

“I don’t know if Mountain Echo gave the berry patch to Brave Warrior along with the stream,” Fox-of-the-Water said, “but neither of them would mind if we ate some with our meal. It would be different if we picked all of them. We can eat a few while the fish is cooking.”

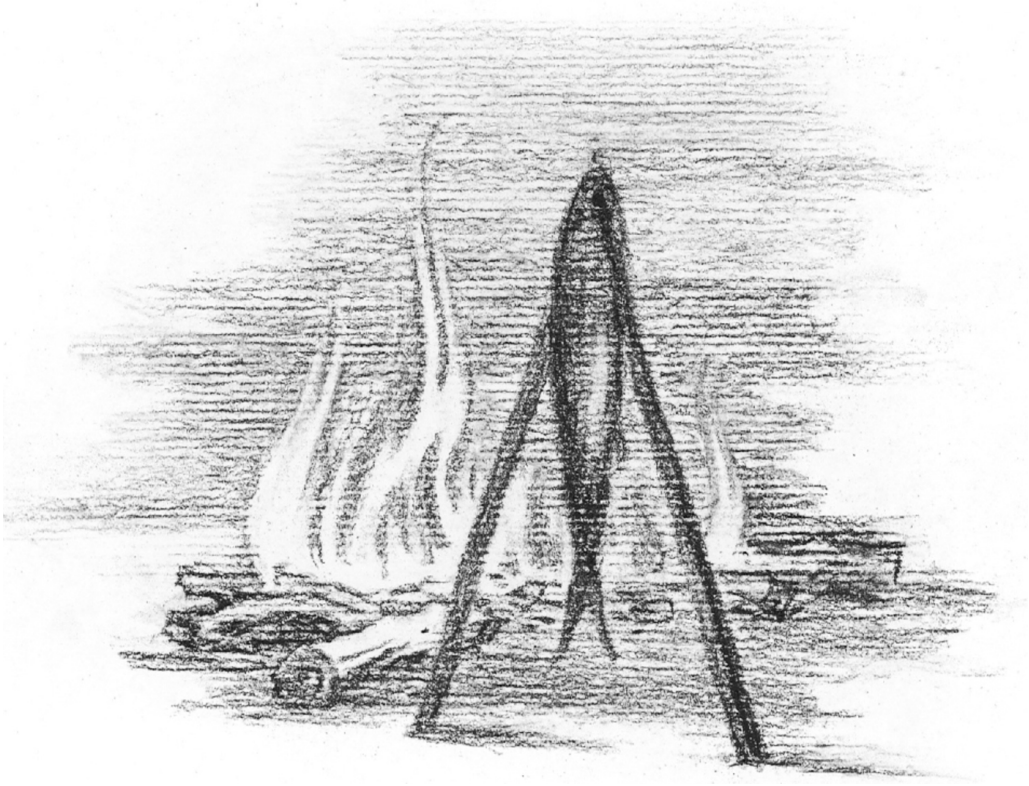
The Indian boy pulled a handful of dried cedar bark out of a leather bag that hung at his waist. He found a hardwood stick.

Amanda and Will watched him twirl the stick back and forth like a drill in the soft, woolly bark.

“Get some firewood ready,” he said. He went on twirling.

By the time they had gathered a pile of dry twigs and sticks of all sizes, a tiny flame was flickering in the dry cedar bark. The children added wood little by little until they had a cooking fire.

Fox-of-the-Water used his bone knife to clean a large fish. He set it close to the fire. The fish was held upright in a split stick tied together at the top with a piece of cedar bark.



When the fish was cooked on one side, Amanda turned the stick so that the other side faced the heat.

All three children took turns watching to make sure the fish did not burn. In between watching, they nibbled blueberries off the bush.

Amanda picked three very large leaves from a plant growing near the stream. “We can use these for plates.”

As soon as the fish was cooked, Fox-of-the-Water cut thick slices off it. They all ate with their fingers. Amanda and Will had never known that fish could taste so good. Everybody had second and third helpings.

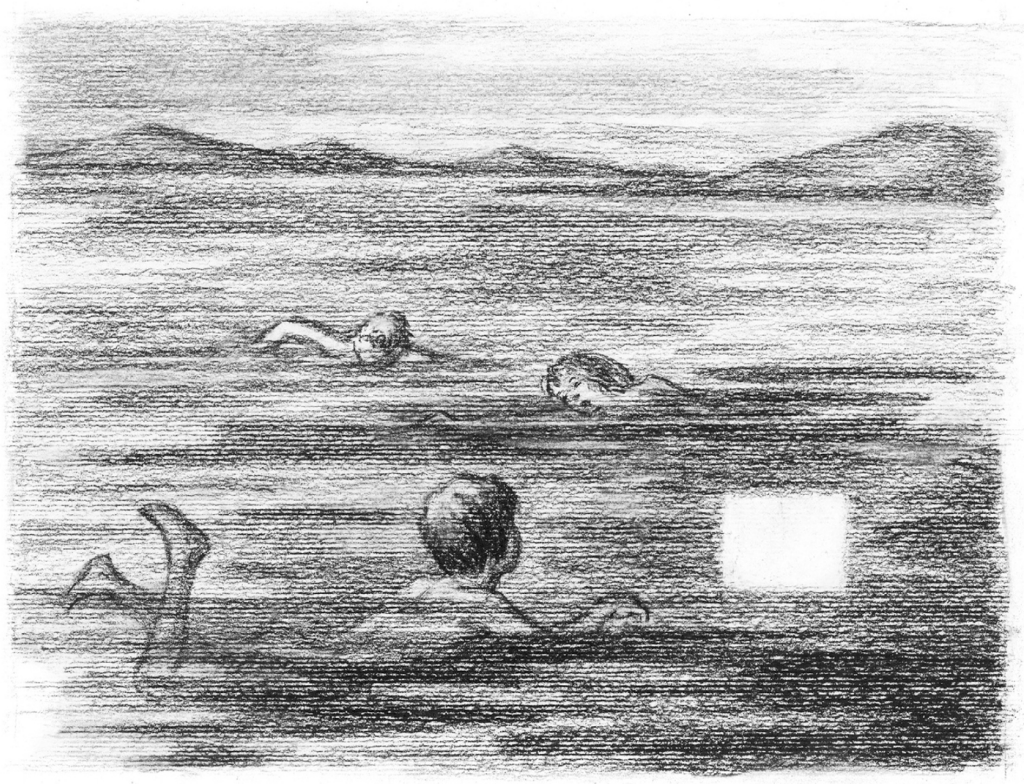
After the meal, Will and Amanda put their sneakers on. Will kicked dirt onto the fire and stamped on it. Amanda and Fox-of-the-Water cupped their hands and brought water from the stream to soak the ground.

The burden basket was heavy with fish now. The three children tried taking turns at first. Then they looped the straps so that they could all get a grip on the basket. They walked back through the dark woods, stopping now and then to put down the basket and rest.

After what seemed an age, the trees became smaller and brighter green. Still the children walked and walked. They were hot and tired when at last they came out onto the sunny beach. They set the basket down in the shadow of a rock.

“I’m going for a swim!” Fox-of-the-Water took the knife from around his neck, the leather bag from his waist, slipped out of his shirt, and put everything under a stone. He raced across the sand and splashed into the little foaming waves. “Come on in. The water’s fine!”

17



Will and Amanda took off their sneakers. They ran to the water and jumped in.

Fox-of-the-Water was swimming dog-paddle style. After a while he stopped and watched Will and Amanda. They had both learned to swim at the Y.

“I wish I could swim like that,” the Indian boy said. “You go so much faster than I do.”

“We could teach you how,” Amanda told him.

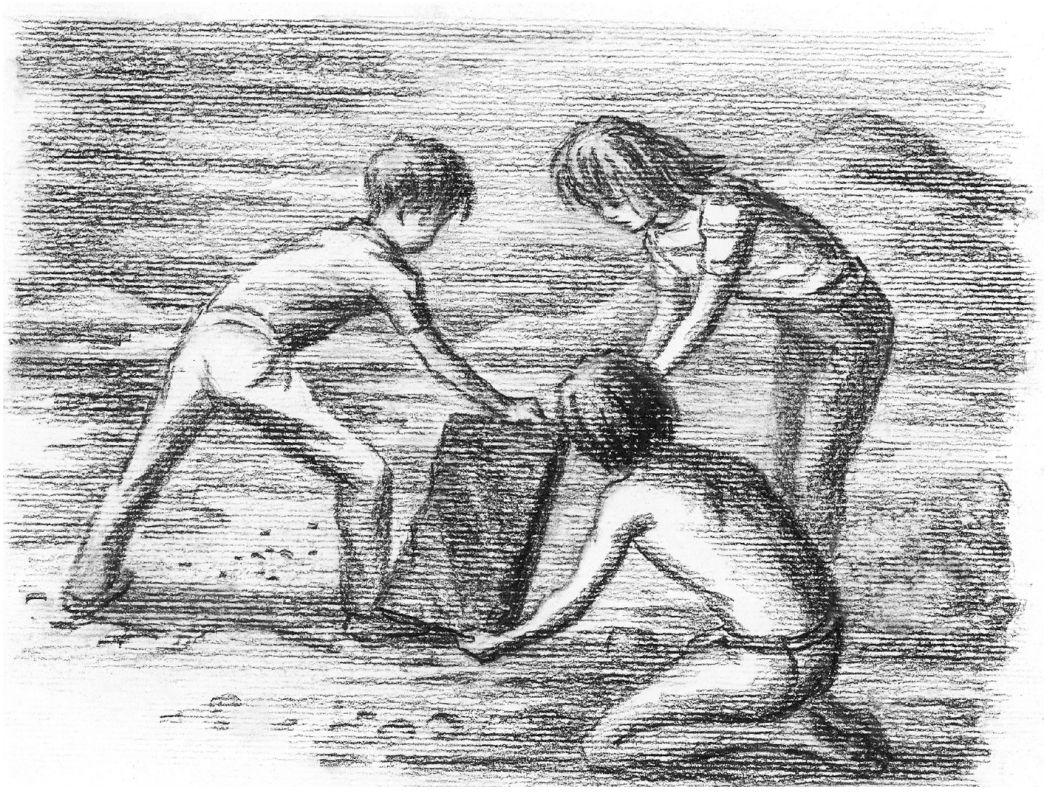
The Indian boy looked at the sun. “Maybe tomorrow,” he said. “We’d better get home with those fish.”

The tide had gone out since they started swimming. The wet sand was covered with oysters.

“If we didn’t have such a heavy load in the basket, we could take these back to Sunset Moon,” Fox-of-the-Water said. “She loves oysters.”

Amanda saw a black stone sticking up under a pile of shells. “That looks like the same kind of stone Bright Star used for his beautiful box!”

“That stone is good for making arrowheads,” Fox-of-the-Water said. “The saya-gay might give me the leftover chips. I need some new arrows.” He started to dig the stone out of the sand.



“If we don’t get it now, the sea may take it back again.”

Will and Amanda helped him raise the stone. It was nearly two feet long and almost as wide, but it was thin and flat like a piece of slate. The three children carried the stone above the high-water mark on the beach and hid it under a bush. Amanda broke a twig off the bush.

Will was shivering now.

“We’re taught to run up and down the beach after a swim until we’re warm.” Fox-of-the-Water started running.

Will and Amanda decided to run, too.

As soon as they were warm again, the children picked up the basket of fish and carried it back along the beach.

The saya-gay was sitting on the platform in front of his house, making something out of feathers. He came over to look into the basket. “Ah!” He lifted out a shining fish. “This will do for my supper.”

16

Amanda thought Bright Star was very rude. He never said “please” or “thank you” and just took what he wanted. She waited for Fox-of-the-Water to tell the saya-gay about the black stone. The Indian boy didn’t say a word. He always seemed to be frightened of the witch doctor.

Still, there was something about the little man that had made Amanda like him even before he had saved her from the bear.

“Bright Star,” she said, “we found a black rock like the one you used for your box.”

The saya-gay was so excited that he almost dropped the fish he was holding by the tail. “Where did you see this rock, Mandy? I’d like to get it before anyone else finds it.” He put the fish into a basket of water near the door of his house.

“It was in the wet sand at low tide,” Will told him. “We dug it out and hid it under a bush.”

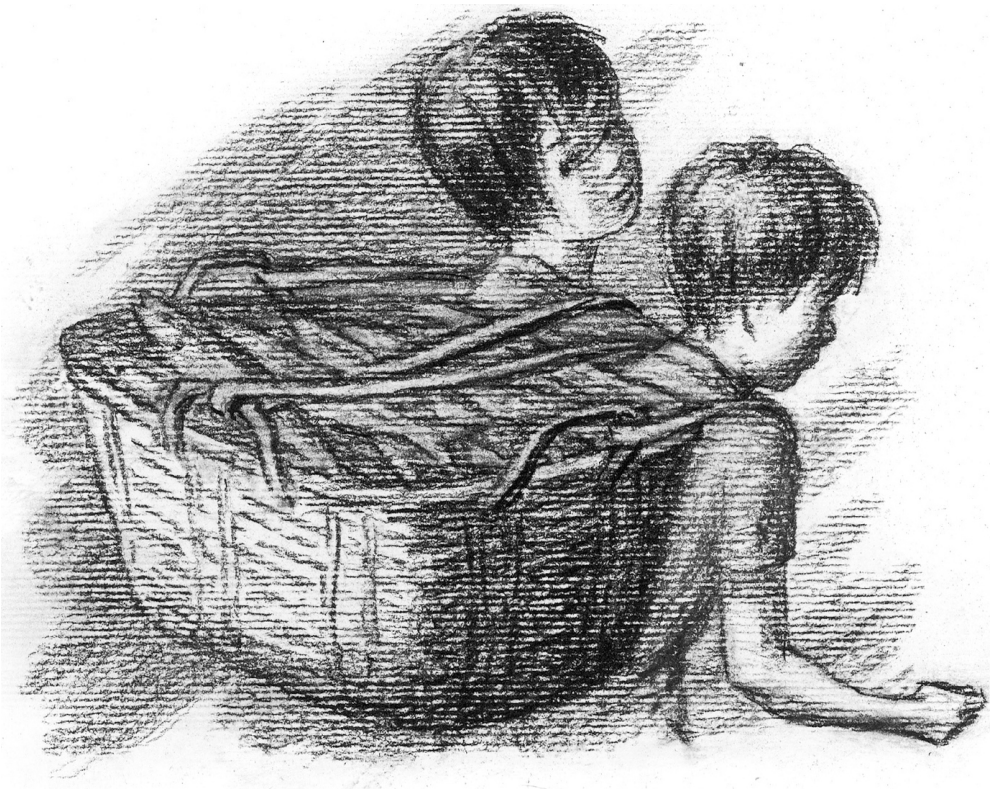
Bright Star went into his house and came out with a mat rolled up under his arm. “Mandy,” he said, “would you please show me where to find the rock?”

“First I have to help the boys carry these fish to Sunset Moon,” Mandy told him.

“We don’t need help, Mandy!” Fox-of-the-Water said.

“Let me fix those straps.” Bright Star looped the burden straps to make a double harness. The boys were side by side now, with the basket on their backs. They trotted off like a pair of ponies.

“Come on, Mandy.” The saya-gay carried his rolled-up mat over one shoulder and walked beside Amanda. They talked as they went along.



“Why are you so polite and friendly to Will and me and so mean to Fox-of-the-Water?” Amanda asked. “He’s scared of you.”

It was a little while before Bright Star answered. “Something tells me you’re very different, and I can talk to you. I have to keep all these people afraid of me or I can’t help them. If they thought I was just like them, they wouldn’t believe in me. It’s lonely. I haven’t talked to anybody like this since I was thirteen years old. That’s when I knew I was going to be a saya-gay.”

“Why did you become one?” Amanda wanted to know.

“My uncle was a saya-gay, and my family always thought I should be one someday, too. Saya-gays are born different from other people. I had dreams about things that would happen and knew what people were thinking. When I was thirteen, I had a vision of a bright light coming from the sky. That was a sign that I was meant to be a saya-gay.

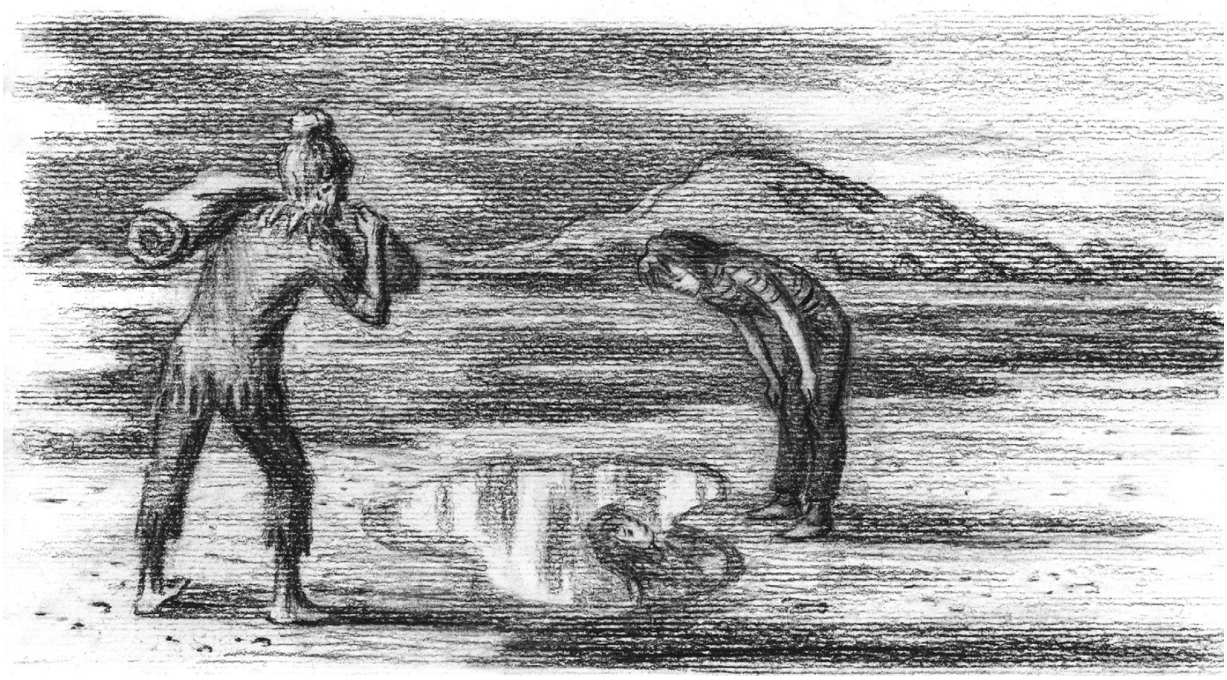
“I had to let my hair and nails grow, and this bone was put through my nose. The tribe sent me into the woods to make friends with the animals. No one else has been my friend until you and your brother came along.

“I have the strangest dreams about you. You don’t belong in this time or place. Tell me how you came here.”

19

Amanda told Bright Star all about Brooklyn and the museum and how she and Will had looked into the black mirror and been taken back in time.

The saya-gay kept stopping her to ask questions. Amanda told him that the museum was a very big house built of stone where old, old things were kept. He understood that the totem poles there were so old that all the paint was gone, and the wood was worn and broken, but he didn't know what a mirror was. When they came to a little tidewater pool on the beach, Amanda leaned over to look into it. She saw herself reflected in the still water. "A mirror is like this, Bright Star. You can see yourself in it, only it isn't water. A mirror is flat and hard and shiny."



Amanda went on to tell how she and Will had looked into the magic mirror and what had happened afterward. “This is a wonderful place to be,” she told the saya-gay, “but I keep worrying about how we’ll get home. Our mother and father must think something terrible has happened to us.”

Bright Star tugged at his scraggly beard. “Mandy, stop worrying! That never does any good.” He smiled at her. “Tell yourself that everything will be all right.”

Amanda felt better at once. “Look, Bright Star, here’s the bush where we hid your rock!” She leaned over and pushed back the branches that covered it.

The saya-gay leaned over to touch the black rock. “How did you know which bush it was under, Mandy? They look so much alike I was afraid you wouldn’t find it.”

Mandy pulled a green twig out of her jeans pocket and showed him where she’d taken it off the bush. “I kept it to match with the bush just in case another bush had a broken branch.”

Bright Star unrolled the mat he was carrying and lifted the rock onto it. Then he took hold of one corner of the mat, and Amanda grabbed another. Together they started dragging the mat across the sand.

Long before they reached the saya-gay’s house they saw Will and Fox-of-the-Water running to meet them.

Now the boys helped Amanda pull the mat. Bright Star followed behind, making sure that the rock was safely moved.

“Sunset Moon wants all of us in the house before dark,” Fox-of-the-Water said. “She told me to warn you and Will not to drink from the streams or wade in the water once the sun goes down.”

“Why not?” Will asked.

“The land otters bewitch the streams and lakes after sunset,” the Indian boy told them. He lowered his voice to a whisper. “Of course, Bright Star is safe. He has a powerful charm to protect him from the otters.”

20

The saya-gay said good-bye to the children and took the black rock into his little house.

Fox-of-the-Water began to run. Will and Amanda chased after him. As they came near the line of houses, they heard singing. The people of the village were ending the day as they had begun it, standing on the beach to sing. The boats were all pulled up onto the beach.

When the songs were done, they all went into their houses. Most of those in Mountain Echo's house had already eaten supper, but there was still plenty of food in the wooden boxes by the fire. It didn't seem to annoy anyone that the children were late. People ate whenever they were hungry. While they were eating, Amanda noticed that a row of drums was being set up on the big platform at the rear of the house. "What's happening over there, Fox-of-the-Water?"

"Someone in Aunt Snow Rainbow's family must be sick," Fox-of-the-Water told her. "They're getting ready for the saya-gay. Come and watch."

Will and Amanda gobbled down the rest of the food in their wooden bowls. They ran outside to clean the bowls before putting them away.

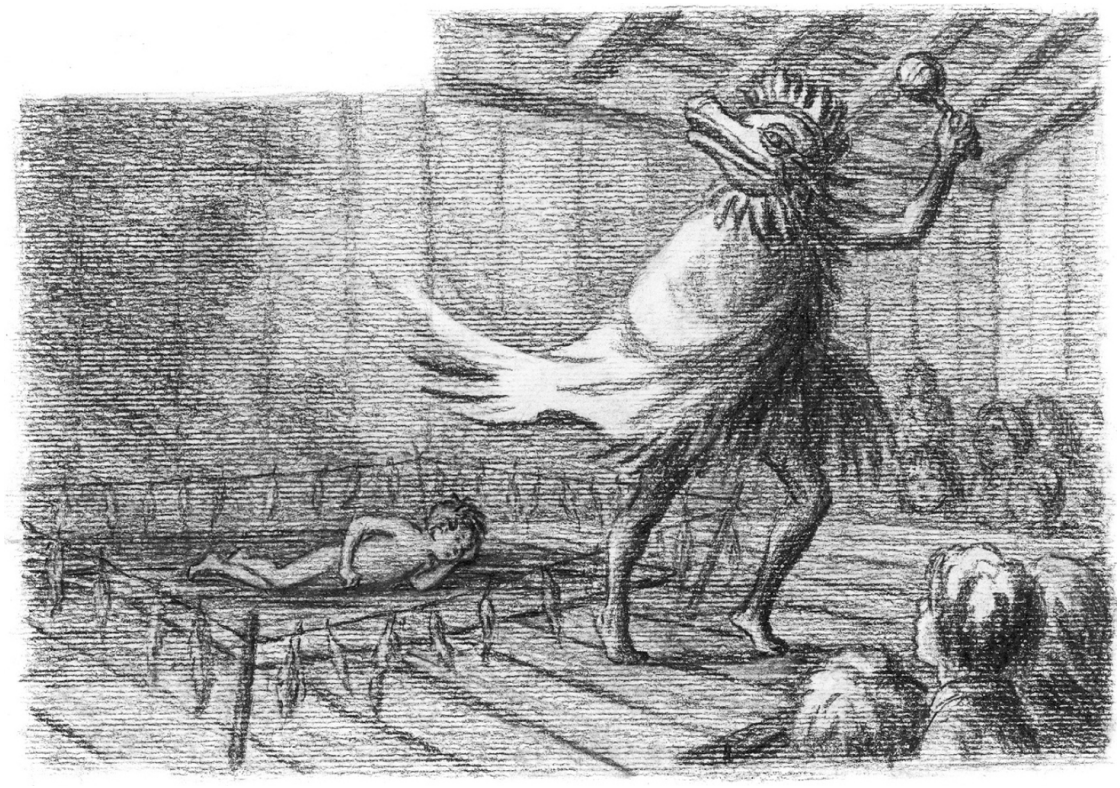
Mountain Echo had gone to fetch the saya-gay. While they were waiting for him to arrive, Snow Rainbow laid a boy about five years old on a sleeping mat in the middle of the platform. A line of people sat down behind the drums.

Then Bright Star walked into the house. Mountain Echo came after him. The big room was very quiet.

The saya-gay set down a large basket on the platform. He took out a cord decorated with feathers and stretched it around the little boy.

"That's to protect him," Fox-of-the-Water whispered.

Bright Star took the mask of an old woman’s spirit from his basket. He danced back and forth while the drums beat softly. The saya-gay changed into the mask of a bear spirit, then to an old man’s spirit. Next he was a spirit living in the clouds.



Each time the saya-gay changed masks, the drums beat a little louder and Bright Star danced faster. When at last he put on a red mask with a wolf on top and three otters on each side, the little man was dancing like a whirlwind.

Suddenly he stopped and leaned over the sick child. Bright Star took off his mask. He put his mouth first on the boy’s chest, then on his throat.

“He’s sucking out the sickness,” Fox-of-the-Water said.

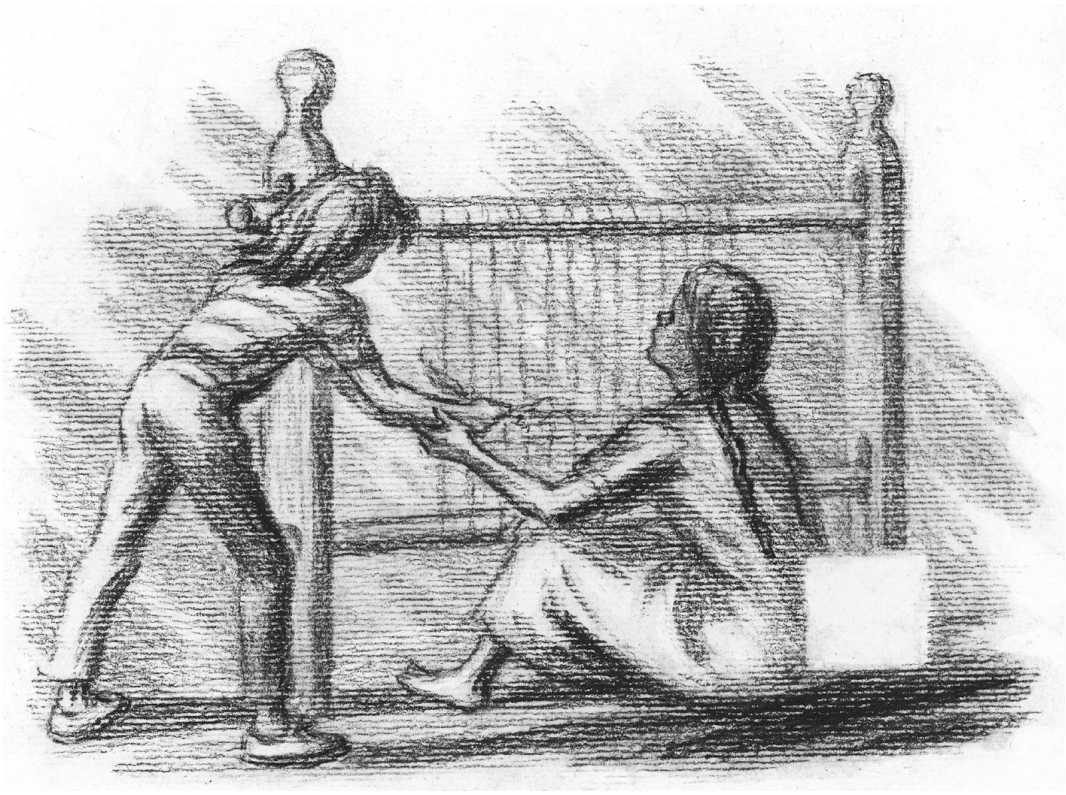
The saya-gay blew a long breath toward the smoke hole in the roof.

The people in the room smiled at each other. Amanda and Will could see they all believed Bright Star had blown the sickness away.

Snow Rainbow held out a little bowl shaped like a boat. The saya-gay put three handfuls of herbs into it. “Mix these with a little water and put it on

your son’s chest,” he told her. “Keep him quiet, and make him drink water. He’ll be better in the morning.”

21



Fox-of-the-Water’s little cousin was much better the next morning. It was a damp, drizzly day, so he couldn’t go out to play, even if his mother had let him.

On cloudy days everybody stayed indoors. Some of the people were making baskets. Sunset Moon set up a big loom and began to weave cedar bark string into a blanket. She taught Amanda to twist duck feathers into strings that were woven across the cloth.

Fox-of-the-Water showed Will his bow and a sealskin case big enough to hold twelve arrows. Together the two boys made a bow for Will out of wood from a yew tree. They wrapped the ends of the stick in wet seaweed and buried it in the warm ground very near the cooking fire. The wood steamed until it was soft enough to be bent easily. A cord was made of the strong sinew from a walrus.

“I’ve been saving the right kind of sticks to make arrows,” Fox-of-the-Water said, “but we have to make arrowheads.”

“Do you have feathers for them?” Will asked.

“We don’t use feathers on our arrows,” the Indian boy told him.

In the afternoon Bright Star came to the big house. He put a little leather bag on the ground between Will and Fox-of-the-Water. “Make good use of these!”

The saya-gay was wearing a pointed basket hat to keep off the rain. He visited the little boy he had cured the night before and then went back to his own house.

Will opened the leather bag and poured twelve pieces of black stone into his hand. “Thanks for telling Bright Star that Fox-of-the-Water wanted these, Mandy.”

“I forgot to tell him,” Amanda said.

“That’s spooky,” Will whispered.

“He has second sight,” Fox-of-the-Water said. He took one of the pieces of black stone and began to chip at it with a heavy stone pounder.

Amanda tried to tell herself that Bright Star must have thought Fox-of-the-Water needed arrowheads. Everybody seemed to find reasons to be afraid of the saya-gay. But Amanda liked Bright Star. She decided to go and visit him the next day.

The next day wasn’t just drizzling. It was raining hard. It rained for three days. Everybody stayed indoors and worked. The saya-gay came to the big house to get food that he took back to his own place. He never stopped to talk to the children.

Then one morning Amanda was awakened by singing. All the people in the village were outdoors again, in their boats or on the beach. The rain had stopped, and the sky was a clear deep blue. Sunlight danced across the water.

Amanda had never seen such a beautiful day.

22

When the singing was over, Mountain Echo stood on the platform in front of his house and raised his arm. The people on the beach all became quiet.

"The Ripe Berry Moon is almost over. The Salmon Moon will soon be here. Today we will do the salmon dance." Mountain Echo put on a mask with two red spots on the forehead, three black marks on the left cheek, and three red marks on the right. He picked up a carved and painted wooden salmon.

Bright Star came out of the big doorway in the totem pole to join Mountain Echo.

The saya-gay was wearing the beautiful fish mask he had made. The two of them walked to the edge of the water.

The people followed them, dancing and singing. Then Bright Star called to the water spirits and begged them to bring back the salmon.

After that the canoes were paddled away, and everybody on shore went about their daily routine.

Amanda and the two boys went to get something to eat from the wooden boxes by the cooking fire.

“When the salmon return,” Fox-of-the-Water said, “we will all go and camp by the rivers while we’re catching the fish. It’s fun. Instead of living with uncles and aunts and cousins in one big house, each family has its own little shelter of brushwood.”

“Will that be soon?” Amanda asked.

“Maybe the day after tomorrow,” the Indian boy told her. “It all depends on the salmon.”

“You promised to teach me how to use the bow and arrow, Fox-of-the-Water,” Will said. “Why don’t we do it today?”

Amanda had finished eating. “I don’t want to risk getting in the way of your arrows, Will.” She stood up. “Make him be careful, Fox-of-the-Water. I’ll see you both later.”

Amanda walked along the beach toward Bright Star’s little house. When she got there she heard a scraping sound coming from inside.

A mat hung over the doorway. Amanda went close to it and called, “Bright Star!”

The scraping stopped. The saya-gay slipped out of the doorway without moving the mat enough to let Amanda see into his house. “Mandy! I

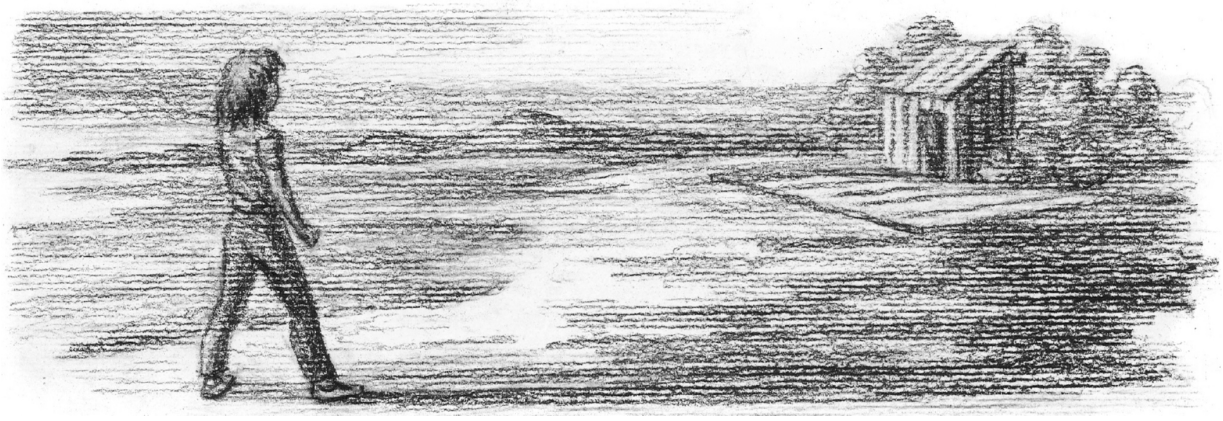
thought it was you. Is anything wrong?”

“I just came to visit,” Amanda told him. “Will and Fox-of-the-Water are busy with their bows and arrows.”

“I know you think I’m rude,” the witch doctor said, “but I haven’t time for a visit. I’m working on something.”

“What is it?” Amanda asked.

“If I tell you, it will break the spell.” Bright Star went back into his house.



Amanda felt as if she had been slapped in the face. She bit her lip to keep from crying.

She went back to the Eagle house to help Sunset Moon make cakes of dried berries and pack them away for later use.

When the tide was out, Sunset Moon put a mat on her back. “That’s to keep me dry,” she said. “Come along. I’ll show you how we dig clams.”

The Indian woman jabbed the pointed end of a short, flat stick deep into the mud and twirled the other end. At once a great many clams came up out of the wet sand. Sunset Moon bent over at the hips as if she wanted to touch her feet with her face. She quickly reached all around to gather the best clams before the tide returned.

Sunset Moon and Amanda roasted some of the clams over the open fire and shared them with the slave woman. They put the rest into one of the wooden boxes to steam.

When the boys came back from their bow-and-arrow practice, they ate steamed clams and clover roots.

The day became very warm in the afternoon. All three children went swimming in the bay. Both Amanda and Will showed Fox-of-the-Water the strokes they had learned at the Y.

The Indian boy reminded them to get out of the water before sunset. “If you don’t,” he warned, “you will be forever in the power of the land otters!”

The people in the boats returned before sunset, too. They dragged the heavy canoes up onto the beach as the evening singing began.

Amanda was so tired by the time she lay down on her mat that she fell asleep at once.

Sometime later in the night she woke. The big house was stuffy from the smoldering fires. Amanda got up and walked to the archway in the totem pole to get a breath of fresh air.

She looked across the bay.

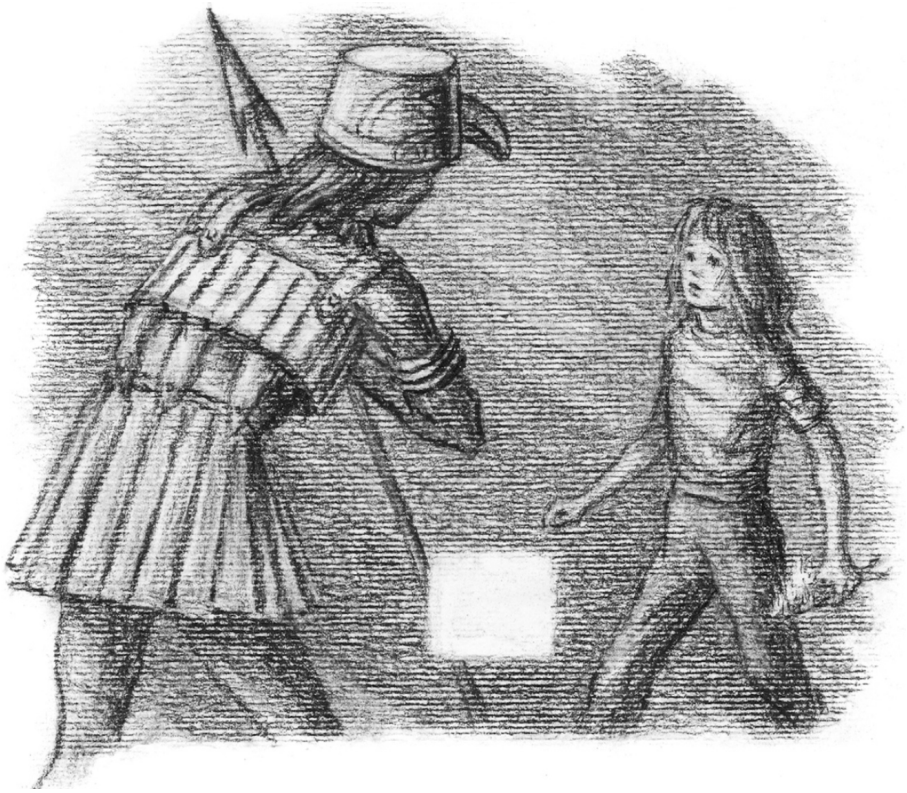
A pale moon was rising above the mountain. By its light Amanda saw something moving on the water. It seemed to be a huge canoe, but of course it couldn’t be. The people of this tribe would not go out of the house on a cloudy day because they thought bad spirits were around them. They surely would not go out on the water at night!

Suddenly Amanda had a terrible thought. Perhaps the people in the canoe came from a different tribe who were not afraid of the dark. They might be coming to this village to capture slaves!

There was not a moment to lose. Amanda raced back to the fire and grabbed one of the fish that was used to make oil. She held it to the flame. The fish burned like a candle.

“Wake up!” She held the blazing fish high and yelled as loud as she could. “Wake up! A big canoe is coming!”

24



Mountain Echo was up and dressed in a wooden helmet and armor made of wooden slats before most of the other people were awake. “Go next door, Mandy. Tell Crooked Toe Eagle what you have seen.” He turned to Fox-of-the-Water. “You and Will must warn the people in the other houses of the village. Hurry!”

Brave Warrior was in armor now, too. He started handing spears, clubs, and bows and arrows to the rest of the people in the house.

Amanda didn’t stop to put on her sneakers. She rushed barefoot to the house next door, holding the burning candle-fish.

The doorway of this house was covered by a mat. Amanda had to push it aside to get into the room. The room was very dark and smelled stale. The people were all asleep, and many of them were snoring.

Amanda yelled, “Wake up!” several times, but everybody went right on sleeping.

She ran over to the platform at the back of the house. Four men and three women and a number of children were sleeping there.

“Wake up!” Amanda screamed. Still nobody did.

She leaned over the oldest man and shined the light from the candle-fish into his face. He put his hand over his eyes.

Amanda reached out and shook his shoulder. The man opened his eyes and sat up. “Who are you?” he said in a sleepy voice.

“Mountain Echo sent me to warn you that the village is going to be attacked,” Amanda told him. “Get ready to defend yourself!”

The man still kept staring stupidly at her.

Amanda left him and shook each of the other men in turn, screaming, “The enemy is coming!” over and over. By this time the women and children were awake. They seemed to think Amanda was the enemy!

She threw down the burning fish, which was getting very short, and ran back to the front door. Amanda pushed aside the mat hanging over it and slipped out into the open air.

She looked around for her brother, but she didn’t see him anywhere.

The moon was higher in the sky.

Amanda wondered if the people in the other houses were like those in Crooked Toe Eagle’s house. They didn’t act like Eagles at all. She looked at the top of the totem pole in front of the house. There seemed to be a frog on top, or maybe, Amanda thought, it was a toad. Amanda began to understand why Fox-of-the-Water was so proud to be an Eagle.

25

Amanda looked out over the water. The giant canoe was much nearer now. She could see that there were armed men in it. She ran back to the Eagle house. Brave Warrior was standing in the archway of the totem pole with a bow and arrow.

"Did Will and Fox-of-the-Water come back?" she asked him.

"No," the Indian boy's father said. "I came out to watch for them. Go into the house, Mandy. It's not safe for you here."

Amanda was older than either of the boys. She was not going to leave them in danger. She ran toward the next house.

"Mandy, come back!" Brave Warrior called. Amanda kept on running.

When she came to the third house, she saw a man in wooden armor just inside the door. Will and Fox-of-the-Water must have awakened the people here.

The next house showed signs of life, too, but the last two houses were still quiet. Amanda was about to enter the fifth house when someone ran out and almost knocked her over.

“Mandy! What are you doing here?” It was Will.

“Where’s Fox-of-the-Water?” Amanda asked.

“In the last house,” her brother told her. “He said the people there sleep like logs. Come on. Let’s help him wake them up.”

They reached the sixth house just as the Indian boy was coming out. “Mandy, you should be indoors!” He was excited. “Let’s get our bows and arrows, Will!”

Amanda looked around. She pointed at the bay. By now the great canoe was in shallow water. Most of the men who came in it were wading ashore.

The children were standing in a patch of moonlight.

“Get down!” Fox-of-the-Water dropped to the ground and slid on his stomach to the shadow of the nearest house. Will and Amanda did the same.

As soon as they were out of the moonlight, the three of them stood up and stayed close to the wall of the house.

The men in the boat must have hoped to surprise the little village and capture people while they were still asleep or, at least, unarmed. They

formed six groups and came quietly ashore. Each group crept toward a house.

The men of the village in their wooden armor waited in the shadows of their doorways. When the attackers came close they shot them with arrows and rushed at them with spears and clubs.

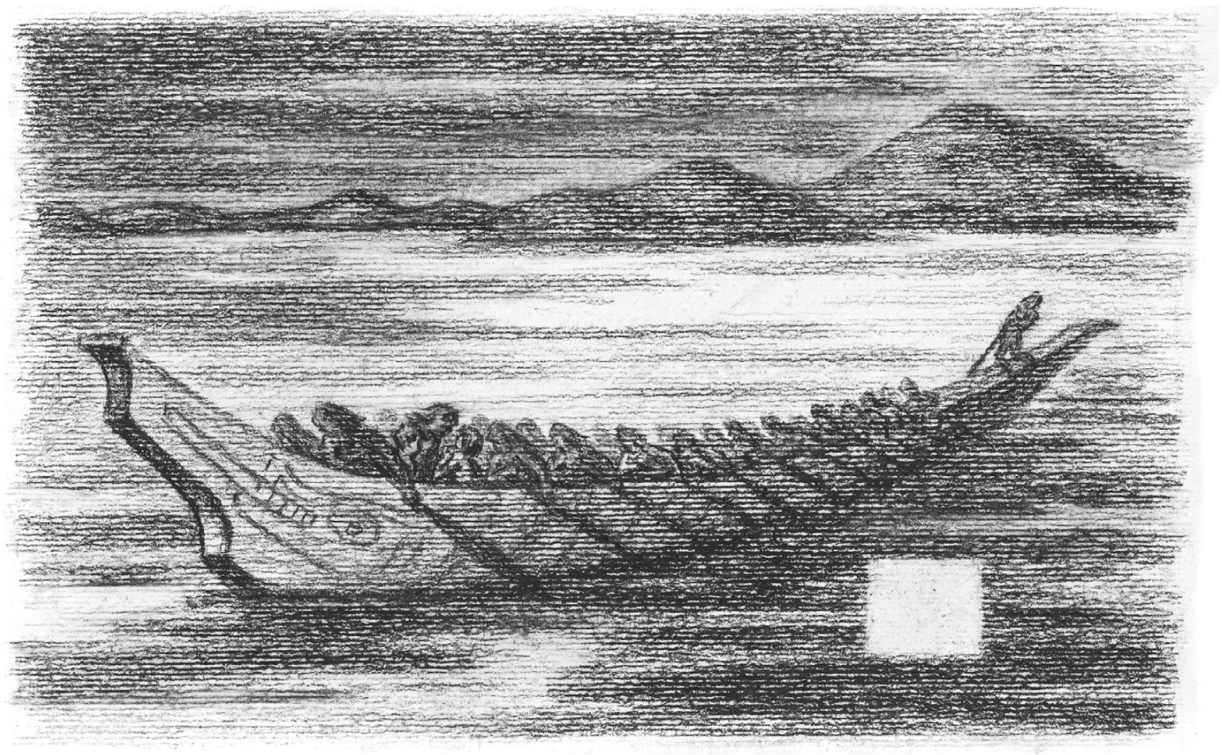
Many of the strangers fell to the ground. Some were killed. Others were badly hurt. Those who could still run went back to the canoe.

The people in the sixth and last house had only just been awakened. They were not as well prepared as the others.

The attackers did not manage to get into this house, either, but they were not badly hurt. When they saw their friends running back to the boat, they decided to follow them. Then one caught sight of Amanda and the boys hiding in the shadows. He made a signal.

The children were grabbed by three strong men and dragged to the big canoe.

26



The strange men threw Amanda and the boys into the canoe. They pushed it into deeper water, climbed in, and began to paddle.

The children huddled together on the bottom of the boat. No one bothered with them. Many of the men were bleeding and crippled from the fighting. The others were paddling as hard as they could. There seemed to be a lot of people here, but Amanda couldn't make out their faces in the dark. She looked over the side of the canoe. "We have to get out of here before we're any farther away from shore. Jump, Fox-of-the-Water!"

The Indian boy shook his head. “The land-otter people would own my soul forever!”

Amanda could see there was no use arguing with him. She jabbed her elbow into her brother’s ribs and cocked her head toward the water. “Heave-ho, Will!” she whispered.

Amanda grabbed Fox-of-the-Water by the shoulders and Will lifted his feet off the ground. Together they threw the young Indian overboard. Then they dived after him into the dark waters of the bay.

The men in the boat heard the noise as the children hit the water. They saw that their captives were missing, but they went on paddling.

Fox-of-the-Water landed with a splash. Then he sank. Amanda and Will dived down after their friend and pulled him to the surface.

“Remember what we told you about treading water?” Amanda said. “That’s what I’m doing now.” She held his head above water.

“If you get tired, roll over and swim on your back.” Will swam in a lazy circle around his sister and Fox-of-the-Water. “And don’t forget to kick like a frog.”

Before long all three children were swimming toward shore. No lights were burning in the village houses to guide them. They swam in the other direction from the mountain in hopes of reaching their own beach.

All three were very tired when at last they staggered out of the surf onto the sand.

Amanda just wanted to curl up and go to sleep on the beach, but Fox-of-the-Water insisted that they had to run up and down the beach to warm up.

They played a game of tag in the moonlight. Then they dug three holes in the sand above the high-water mark. The children lay down and covered themselves with sand to wait for morning. Long before the sun came up they were asleep.

27

Amanda was the first to open her eyes. She sat up and stretched. Then she went to wake up the boys.

All three of the children were hungry. The beach was covered with oysters. Neither Amanda nor Will had ever tasted them, but they had watched their father eat them on the half shell.

Fox-of-the-Water told them he never got as many oysters as he wanted. All the other people in his uncle's house liked them just as much as he did.

He opened an oyster with his knife and smelled it. "Fresh!" The Indian boy held out the oyster. "You can have the first one, Mandy."

To her surprise, Amanda found that the oyster had a delicate, cool, salty taste. "Will, you don't know what you're missing!"

They feasted on oysters for breakfast and finished the meal with wild strawberries that were growing at the edge of the wood.

Fox-of-the-Water first looked at the mountain across the bay. Then he looked at the sun. He turned to the right and started walking along the beach.

Will and Amanda hurried after him.

They walked steadily for two hours. When they rounded a curve in the bay, they saw the village. The first house they came to was the one where they had been captured the night before.

Fox-of-the-Water started to run. Amanda and Will were right behind him. They raced along the beach till they came to the totem pole with the eagle on top.

All the people from the house were outdoors facing the water, but no one was singing.

The Indian boy rushed to his mother. She bent down and hugged him. Her face was wet with tears.

For a little while no one spoke. Then Mountain Echo said, “We were told that you were carried away in the enemy canoe.”

“We were,” Will told him, “but we jumped out of the boat and swam ashore.”

At this everybody seemed to step back, as if to move away from the children.

Sunset Moon looked frightened. She hugged her son tighter.

Fox-of-the-Water looked at his mother. Then he fainted. Sunset Moon laid him gently on the sand.

“Isn’t anybody going to do anything for him?” Amanda cried.

“The only one who could do anything would be the saya-gay,” Brave Warrior told her. “We haven’t seen Bright Star today. He may be dead.”

“I’m going to get him.” Amanda turned to run.

“Take care, Mandy,” Brave Warrior warned. “The spirit of a saya-gay is an evil thing!”

26

Amanda started to run toward the little house of the saya-gay.

"Wait for me, Mandy." Will came after her.

The mat was hanging over the doorway again. Will and Amanda could hear the same scraping sound Amanda had heard before. She called, "Bright Star, come quickly before Fox-of-the-Water dies!"

The noise stopped. "What's wrong with the boy?" the saya-gay asked from the other side of the mat.

"The land-otter spirits have taken his soul," Will said. "It's our fault. We threw him out of the enemy canoe into the water last night!"

Bright Star lifted the mat and came out. "I didn't know there had been a raid!" he said. "I've been working day and night to polish that rock you gave me.

"Will, I'll need you to help me set up these." He dragged some carved and painted cedarwood planks from behind his house. Mandy, go back and tell Mountain Echo and Brave Warrior to bring Fox-of-the-Water here at once. Hurry!"

Amanda ran back with the message.

Fox-of-the-Water was awake now. He seemed to know what was going on, but he couldn't speak.

Amanda held the Indian boy's hand and led him to the saya-gay's house. His mother and father and uncle followed them. All the other people who lived in Mountain Echo's house came after.

Bright Star made Amanda and Will sit beside Fox-of-the-Water on the platform in front of his house. He told them to be very quiet. The painted

boards had been set up on the platform to look like a boat.

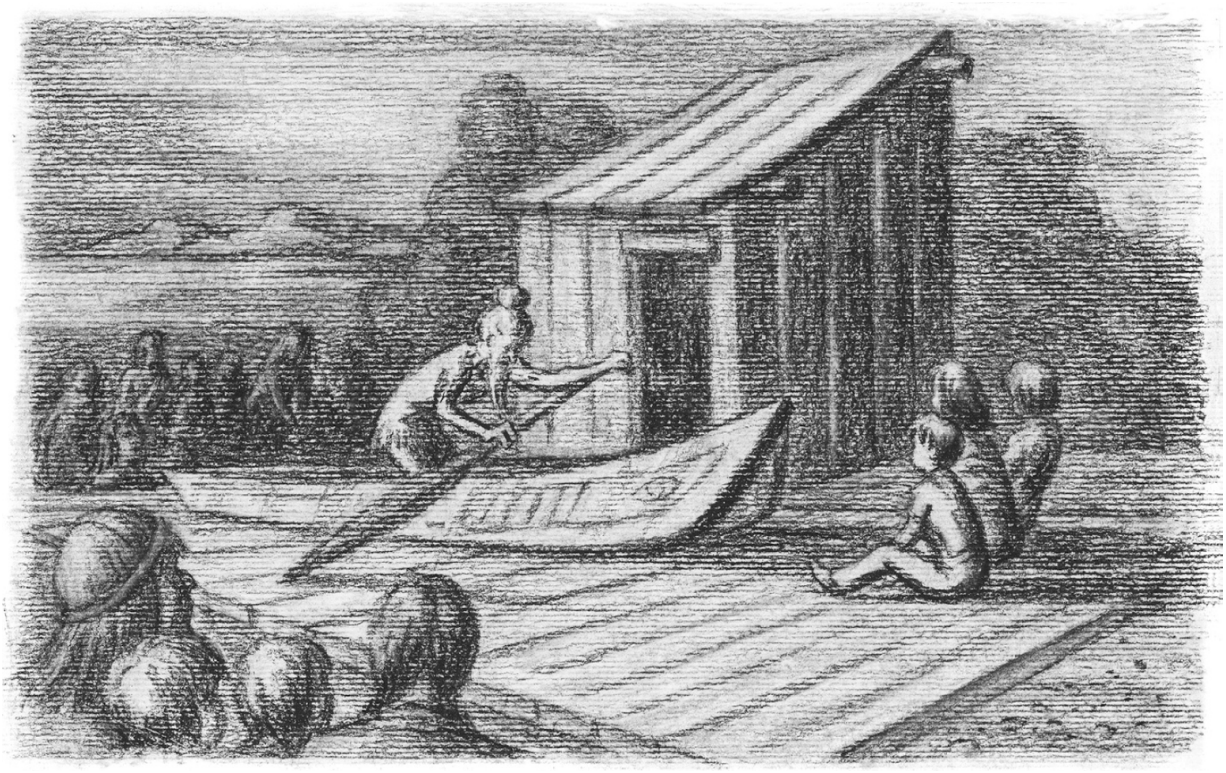
The other people stood around and watched as if they were in a theater. They seemed to Amanda like small children who thought everything they saw on the stage was real.

The saya-gay got into his magic boat. It took him to the underworld. There he fought with a ghost in a spooky battle. He came back with the soul of Amanda in his hands. He placed the invisible soul on her head. “Go and join the healthy people,” he commanded.

Amanda went to stand beside Sunset Moon, who bent down to kiss her.

Bright Star paddled back to the underworld to fight another ghost. This time he brought back Will’s soul, and Will went to join his sister.

The last voyage was longer. Waves nearly wrecked the magic boat. The watching people held their breath.



The third ghost was meaner and harder to outwit. The saya-gay fell to the ground more than once. At last, weary but still brave, Bright Star tenderly placed Fox-of-the-Water’s soul on the Indian boy’s head. “You are well now,” the saya-gay said.

Fox-of-the-Water stood up. “I am forever grateful to you, Bright Star.” The people cheered.

29

Amanda was helping Sunset Moon heat stones to drop into the wooden boxes of water. “Where is the slave woman?” she asked.

“She must have sneaked out of the side door and gone off with our enemies last night,” Sunset Moon said. “Several of the slaves are missing. Perhaps they thought some of the raiders were members of their clans.”

Amanda said nothing. She was happy for the slaves.

“Brave Warrior and I have been talking.” Sunset Moon picked up a stone with a pair of wooden tongs. “You saved our village. We are going to adopt you and Will and change your names. Fox-of-the-Water needs a brother, and you will be the daughter I have always wanted.”

For a minute Amanda was silent. Then she said, “I’d better go and tell Will.”

Amanda ran across the beach to where her brother was skipping stones into the bay. She told him what Sunset Moon had said. “I guess we ought to be grateful. I don’t want to hurt anyone’s feelings, but I miss Mom and Dad!” Amanda was almost crying.

“I feel the same way.” Will dropped the stone he was holding. “Let’s go talk to Bright Star.”

They ran as fast as they could to the saya-gay’s house. He was not there.

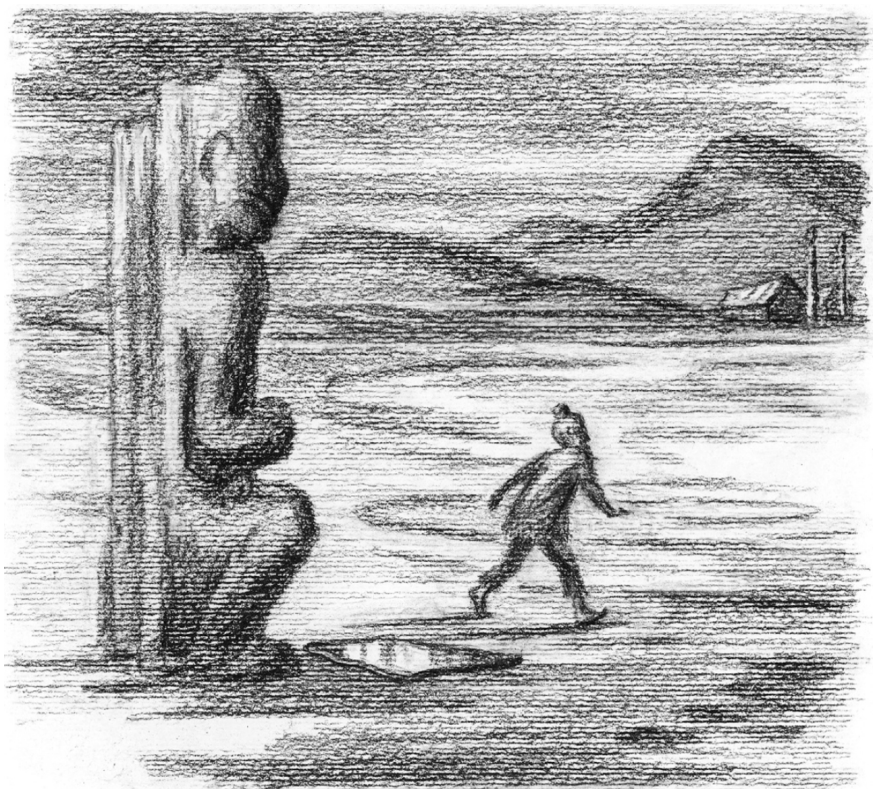
Amanda pointed farther down the beach. “I think I see him.”

Bright Star was standing near the wooden statue where Will and Amanda first found themselves when they looked up from the black mirror.

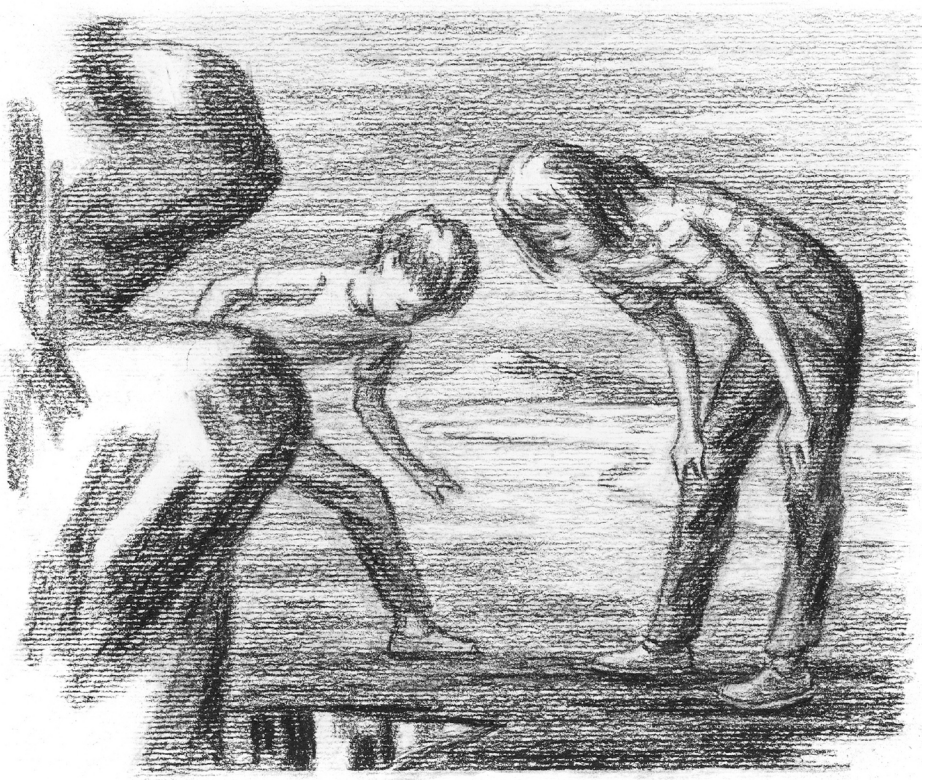
When he saw the two children, the witch doctor called to them. “Come here. I’ve something to show you.”

“Why the rush?” Will asked.

“Don’t ask questions!” the saya-gay told him. “I’ve done the best I could with this thing, and I don’t want anyone to see it but you two. If it works, I’ll bury it in the sand.” He walked away from the statue.



Amanda saw the black rock where the saya-gay had placed it, flat in the sand at the base of the statue. She pulled Will over to it. Bright Star had polished the stone until it gleamed in the sunlight.



They looked down to see the statue dimly reflected in the stone. The bright colors were gone. The wood looked old and battered, and the blue sky above it didn’t show at all.

Suddenly both Amanda and Will had the same wild hope. Maybe Bright Star’s black mirror was *magic*!

They looked up to find themselves once again in the Brooklyn Museum!

The guard came walking over to them. “You’re not old enough to be allowed in here without a grown-up. Who knows what might happen to you?”

“I’m sorry,” Amanda said. “We didn’t know it was against the rules.”

They went out into the heat of the afternoon.

Will grinned. “At least we went swimming.”

Amanda grinned, too.

RUTH CHEW

SUMMER MAGIC

Illustrated by the Author

“Play fair, Sarah! You said you’d let me look at the mummy.” Timothy Standish yanked at his sister’s hand.

Sarah made a face. She wasn’t as fond of mummies as her brother was.

It was Sunday afternoon. Sarah and Timothy were walking through Prospect Park. They were on their way to the Brooklyn Museum.

When they came to the zoo in the park, Sarah wanted to look at the animals.

“It’s too hot to go inside the animal houses,” Timothy said.

“Most of the animals are in the outside cages today,” Sarah told him.

Sarah and Timothy watched the sea lions splashing in their pool. “I wish we could go swimming,” Timothy said.

“Maybe it’s cooler in the Botanic Garden.” Sarah led the way across Flatbush Avenue to the garden on the other side.

They walked past the fountain and the water-lily pond. Sarah stopped to smell a funny crinkly flower. It grew on a bush near the gate that led to the parking lot of the Brooklyn Museum. She caught sight of a metal sign.

“Musk rose, an ancient rose,” Sarah read. “Tim, smell this.”

Timothy stuck his nose into the flower. Then he grabbed the rose and pulled it off the bush.

“Hey there, boy, stop that!” One of the men who worked in the Garden came running over. “I’ll have to ask you to leave.”

The man watched to make sure that Timothy and Sarah went out by the gate. Then he went back to weeding the herb garden.

Sarah was angry. “Tim, how could you do that? You know you’re not allowed to pick the flowers in there.”

“I’m sorry, Sarah. I don’t know why I did it. Somehow I couldn’t seem to stop myself.” Timothy handed his sister the little pink flower. “Here, you take the rose. I don’t want it now.”

It made Sarah feel guilty to hold the flower, just as if she had been the one to pick it. But she didn’t want the little rose to die. She stuck it in the top buttonhole of her shirt. “I’ll put it in water when we get home.”

The children crossed the parking lot to the back door of the museum. Then they went inside.

“At least it’s cool in here,” Tim said.

They had to go through the gift shop to get to the elevator. Sarah wanted to stop and see the dolls from different countries.

“Promise we’ll go and find the mummy next,” Tim said.

“I promise.” Sarah bent over a case to look at a wooden doll from Sweden.

Before Timothy could get her to leave the gift shop, she looked at all the dolls in the case.

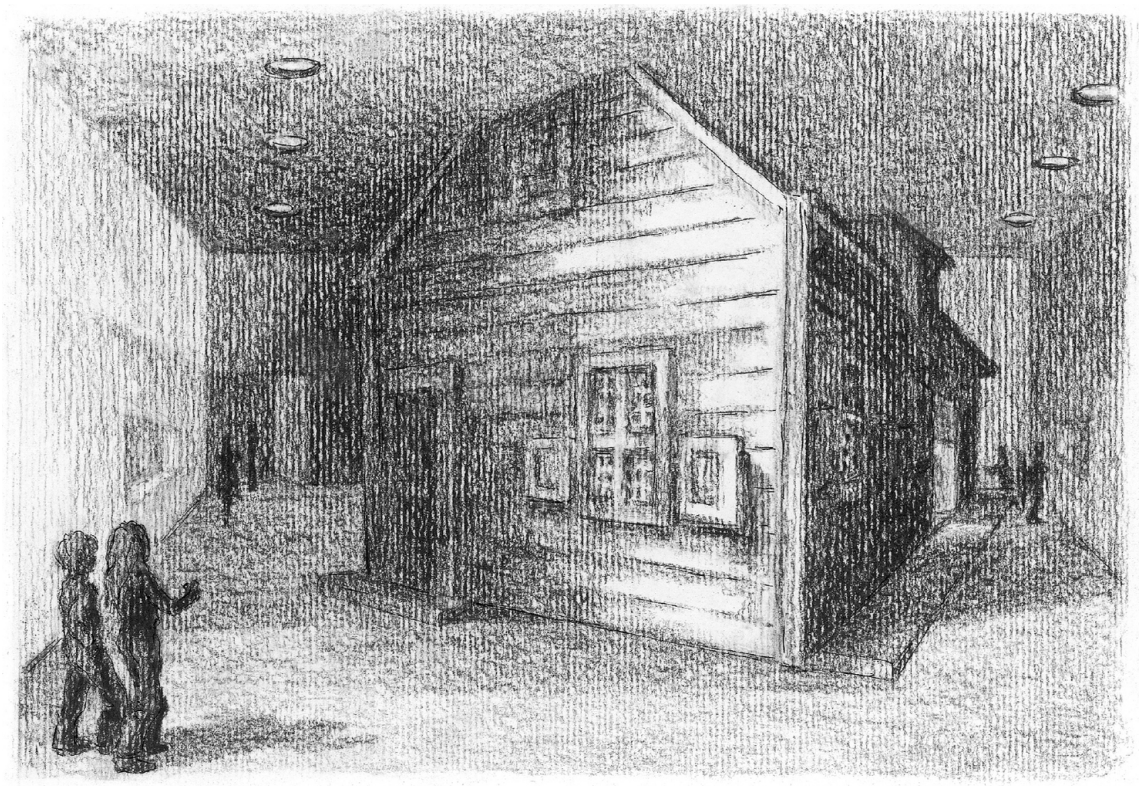
They took the elevator upstairs. The elevator man let them off on the fourth floor. Timothy looked around. “There’s no mummy here. These are just cases full of old furniture and clothes. Let’s get back on the elevator.”

Sarah went over to look at an old-fashioned dress in one of the cases.

“Come on,” Tim said.

The children turned to go back to the elevator. Suddenly Timothy grabbed Sarah’s arm. “Hey, look at that!”

2



Sarah turned and saw what seemed to be a whole house inside the museum.

Timothy went over and peeked through the small square panes of glass in one of the windows. “There’s a big fireplace in there.”

Sarah came to join her brother. She put her nose against the ripply glass. “Look at the big pot hanging on that hook. Wouldn’t it be fun if we could go into the house?”

Timothy stepped back from the window. He caught sight of a small glass case on one wall of the museum. “Sarah, here’s a picture of this house with

trees around it.”

Sarah went to look at it. The house was the same, all right. It was long and low, with gray clapboard walls and a shingled roof. A sign under the drawing read *House on Mill Island, Flatlands, Brooklyn, 1675*.

“1675. That means this house is more than three hundred years old,” Sarah told Timothy.

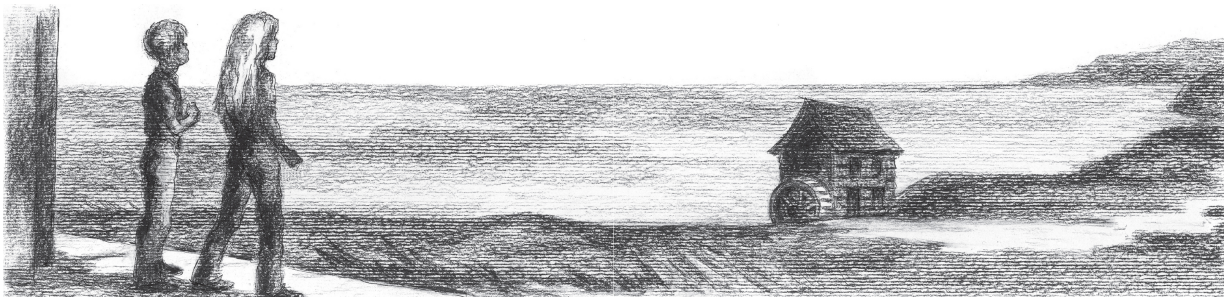
He left the case and walked around the corner of the house. “Sarah,” he called. “Here’s a door. And it’s open!”

Sarah raced around to where Timothy was. Together they crowded through the door into the house.

Smack! About two feet inside the house they were stopped by a glass wall. They could see into the room. But they couldn’t go into it.

Sarah looked through the glass wall at the wide boards on the floor, at the long table with heavy legs, and at the tall grandfather clock. In the corner a bed was built into the wall. It was like a cupboard without doors. There were curtains to pull in front of it. Sarah wondered what it would be like to sleep in a bed like that.

Timothy wrinkled his nose. “What’s that funny smell, Sarah?”



Sarah sniffed the air. She remembered the smell from somewhere. Then she looked down and caught sight of the crinkly little rose in her buttonhole. “Maybe it’s this.” She pulled the flower out of her shirt and held it to Timothy’s nose.

“That’s it, all right.” Timothy sniffed the rose for a minute. “I wonder if the smell gets stronger if you crush it.” He rubbed the flower against the glass wall in front of them.

The smell got stronger and stronger. It almost made Sarah’s head ache. “Stop it, Tim!” She reached out to grab the rose away from him.

Timothy ducked. He stepped forward. The glass had turned to air. And he could walk right through it. Before she knew what she was doing Sarah had chased her brother into the room. He dodged away from her. Sarah stubbed her toe on one of the heavy legs of the long table.

“Ow!” Sarah stopped and looked around. Everything seemed different. The pendulum on the tall clock was swinging back and forth. And the clock was ticking loudly. Somewhere outside the window a rooster crowed.

Timothy looked for the flower he had been holding. It was nowhere to be seen. “Sarah, what’s happened? Let’s get out of here.” Timothy grabbed her hand and pulled her back to the open door.

Sarah half expected to be trapped in the room by the glass wall. But the wall was gone. The two children stepped out of the door onto a long, low stoop in front of the house.

Sarah couldn’t believe her eyes. “Tim,” she whispered, “we’re outdoors!”

“It smells like the seaside,” Timothy said.

“It *is* the seaside, Tim. Look!” Sarah pointed across a dirt road that ran in front of the house.

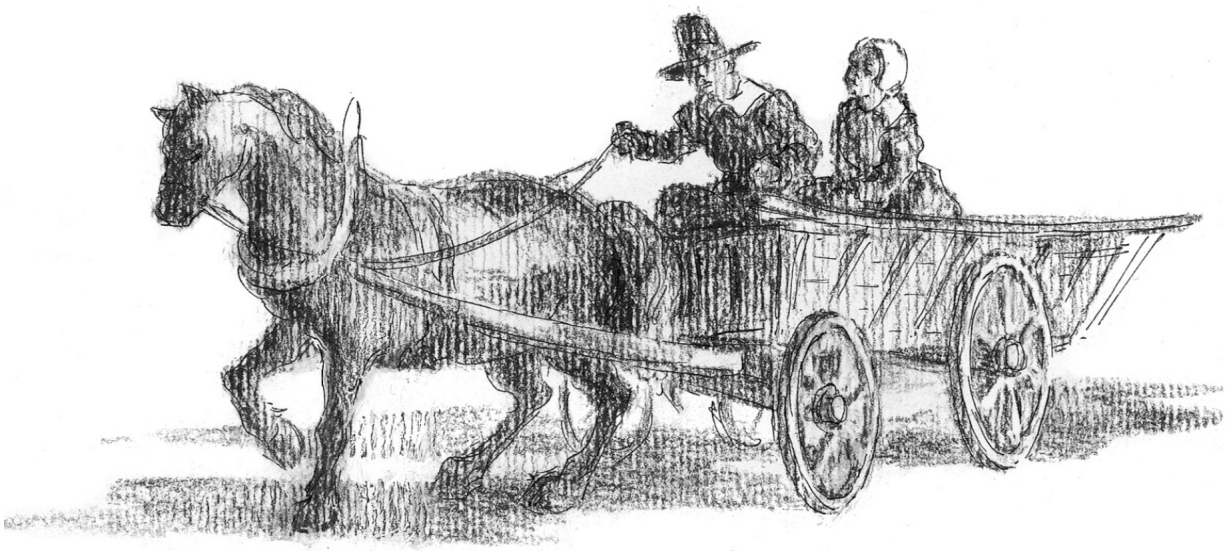
There was a marshy field with sand dunes on the other side of it. Beyond the sand dunes the sea sparkled in the afternoon sunlight.

A creek flowed through the salt marshes and between the dunes. There was a dam over the creek to make a pond. And a mill had been built right on the beach. Timothy and Sarah could hear a steady splashing sound as the big mill wheel turned.

Then they heard something else.

Far down the road there was a rattling, clanking noise. Around the bend came a wagon pulled by a chunky horse. There were two people riding in the wagon.

3



Sarah and Timothy stepped off the stoop into the road. They watched the wagon come nearer and nearer.

A man was driving. He wore a wide-brimmed black hat. The woman beside him had a white cap on her head.

The man waved. “Greetings,” he called to the children.

Timothy and Sarah waved back. But they didn’t say anything.

When the wagon reached the house, the man pulled hard on the reins. “Whoa!”

The horse stopped. The man and the woman climbed down from the wagon. Now the children saw that the man was wearing baggy knee breeches and the woman had skirts down to her ankles.

Sarah tried not to stare. She thought the man and the woman were also trying not to look too hard at the clothes she and Timothy wore.

The woman came forward and held out her hand. She was not young, but her cheeks were still pink and round. And her eyes were bright blue. “I’m Vrouw Maarten,” she said.

Sarah shook hands. “My name is Sarah Standish. This is my brother, Timothy.”

Vrouw Maarten shook hands with Tim. “You must be English,” she said. “Do you live in Gravesend?”

The only Gravesend Timothy knew was Gravesend Bay. He was sure she didn’t mean that. “No,” he said.

The man was opening the big front door of the barn that stood beside the house. Timothy ran to help. The man unhitched the gray horse. Then he tied him to a fence post where the horse could munch the rough grass that grew beside the road. Timothy helped push the high-backed wagon into the barn.

Vrouw Maarten walked over. “Hendrick,” she said, “I see you’ve made friends with Timothy.”

Sarah was following close behind the plump housewife. Vrouw Maarten turned to her. “This is my husband, Heer Maarten. Hendrick, this is Sarah.”

Heer Maarten had a kind face. It was brown and wrinkled. And the blue of his eyes was faded from the sun. When he took off his hat Sarah saw that his blond hair was turning gray.

She was going to hold out her hand. But Heer Maarten bowed to her. So instead of shaking hands Sarah made the little curtsey she had learned for the dance festival in school. It was hard to curtsey when she was wearing jeans.

Timothy was looking into the barn. He pointed to a row of small holes up near the eaves. “What are those for?”

“For the birds to come in and out by,” Vrouw Maarten told him. “See, they have nests up there under the roof.”

Sarah stepped into the barn and craned her neck to see better.

“It’s nice to have company,” Heer Maarten said. “Come inside. Jannetje and I have just come from church.” He led the way into the house.

4

While Heer Maarten and his wife went into the back room to change out of their best clothes, Sarah and Timothy sat down at the long table. Timothy looked at the floor. “There’s sand on it,” he said. “I didn’t notice that when we were in the museum. Everything’s different.”

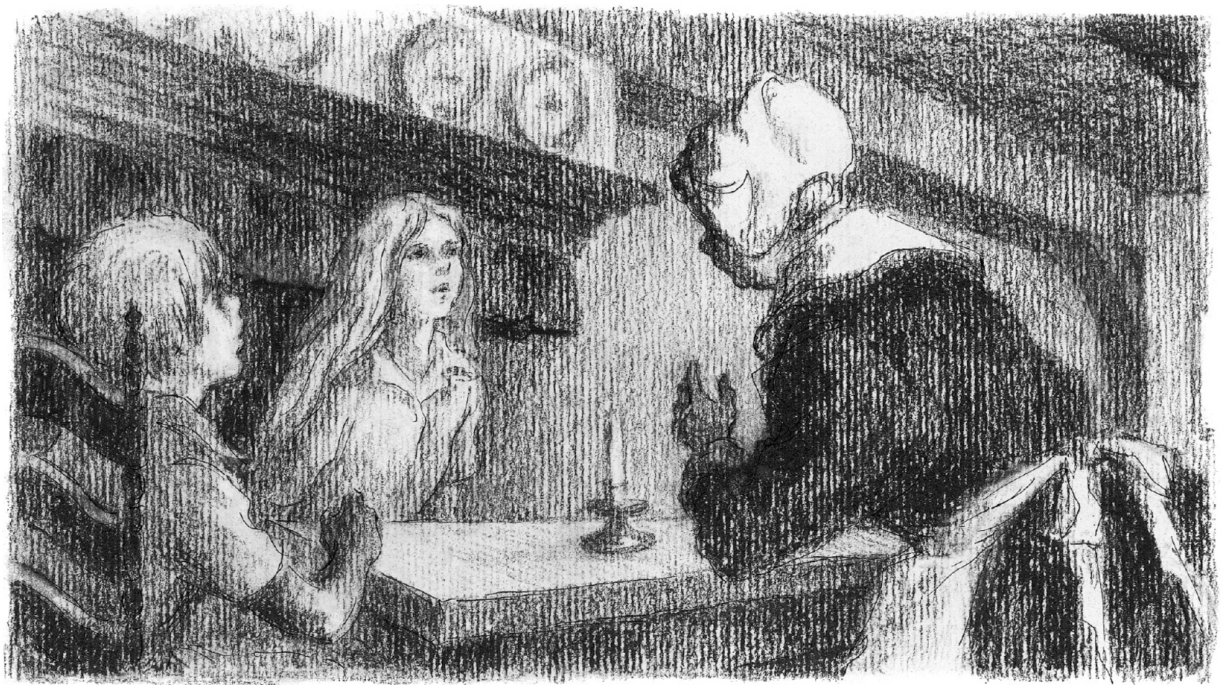
“Yes,” Sarah said. “Don’t you see what’s happened?”

Timothy shook his head.

“We’ve gone back into the past,” Sarah said. “It may be three hundred years before our time. This is the way the house looked in the picture.”

Timothy thought about this. Then he asked, “How are we going to get back where we belong?”

“I wish I knew,” his sister told him.



Vrouw Maarten came back into the room. She was wearing a white apron over a blue dress. “Sarah,” she said, “I don’t mean to be rude. But I can’t help wondering how you children came here. You are very welcome. Still I know your mother must be worried about you.”

Sarah looked into Vrouw Maarten’s blue eyes. “I’m not sure how we got here,” she said. “And I don’t know how to let my mother know where we are. If you want me to tell you what happened, I will. But you won’t believe me.”

Vrouw Maarten looked hard at Sarah. Then she turned to Timothy. “What do you have to say?”

Timothy had a feeling they were in trouble. “It’s my fault,” he said. “I pushed my way into your house.”

Vrouw Maarten frowned. “Just a minute,” she said. She went to the door that led to the back room. “Hendrick, come here.”

Heer Maarten came into the big kitchen-living room. He had changed into soft leather shoes, and he was smoking a long-stemmed pipe. “What’s the matter, Jannetje?”

Vrouw Maarten sat down at the long table. “The children have a strange story to tell. I’d like you to hear it, too.”

Heer Maarten smiled at Sarah and Timothy. “Don’t be afraid,” he said. “I was young once myself.” He sat down beside his wife. “Now let’s hear all about it.”

Sarah swallowed. She knew Heer Maarten would think she was lying. Tears came into her eyes. Vrouw Maarten reached across the table and patted her hand.

“It seems a long time ago,” Sarah started. “But I guess it hasn’t happened yet. We had just finished lunch when Mother thought it might be a good idea if we went to the park for the afternoon.”

“What park, dear?” Vrouw Maarten asked.

“Prospect Park, the big park in the middle of Brooklyn,” Timothy said.

“Oh, you come from Breuckelen!” Vrouw Maarten said. “I didn’t know there was a park in Breuckelen.”

“Hush, Jannetje,” Heer Maarten said. “Let the children tell their story. We’ll ask questions afterward.”

Together Timothy and Sarah told what had happened to them that afternoon. Much of the time Sarah was sure that the Maartens didn’t know what they were talking about. But Heer Maarten and his wife sat across from them at the table and listened until the story was done. Then Vrouw Maarten got up and walked around the table. She put her hand on Sarah’s forehead just as her mother did when she thought Sarah had a fever.

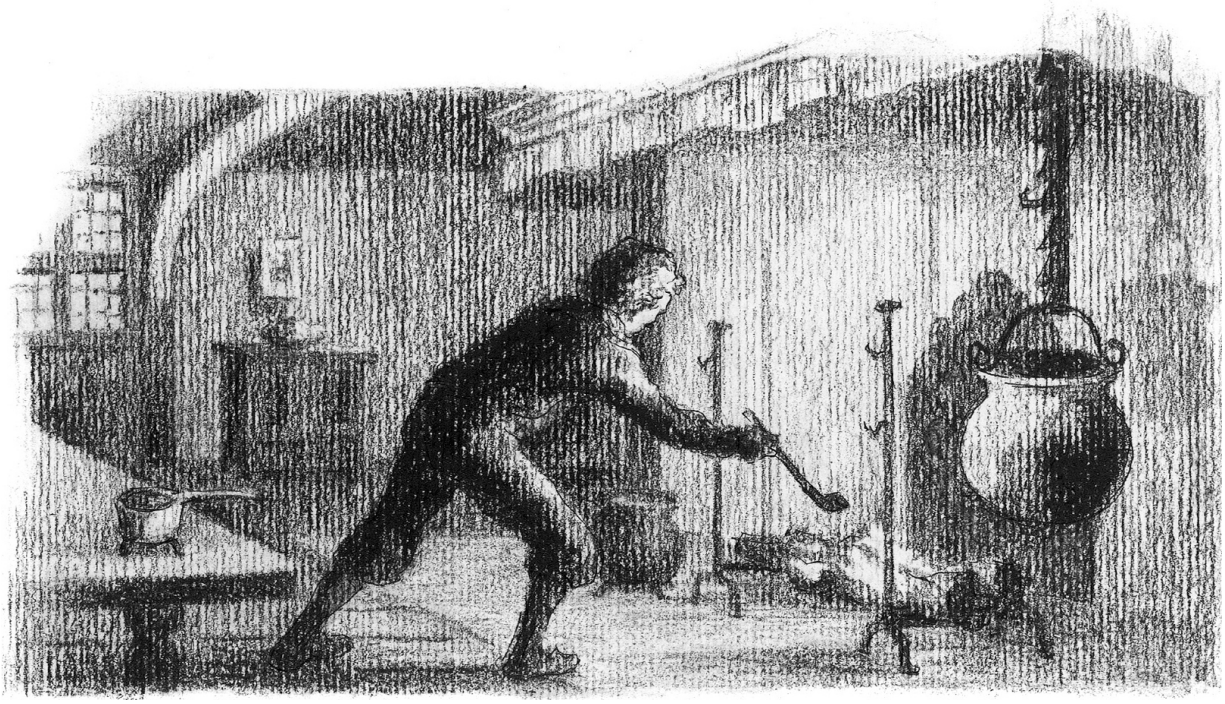
“They seem to believe their story, Hendrick,” she said to her husband.

Heer Maarten looked at the sneakers and blue jeans Sarah and Timothy were wearing. “When I was a boy in the old country,” he said, “we used to gather around the fireside on a winter evening and tell old stories. We knew they weren’t true. But it was fun to think they were. And whatever you believe is true for you.” He smiled at the two children. “I’m going to pretend I believe it, too. Of course, just as soon as I hear that someone is looking for a boy and girl in strange pantaloons, I’ll have to say good-bye to you.”

Vrouw Maarten was shocked. “Hendrick! You mean you aren’t even going to *try* to find their parents?”

Heer Maarten didn’t answer right away. He reached over to feel the zipper on Timothy’s knitted shirt. Timothy showed him how it worked.

“Of course I’ll ask around, Jannetje. Meantime it’s nice to have children in the house again. Now, how about supper?” Heer Maarten stood up. He walked to the fireplace to knock the ashes out of his pipe.



Vrouw Maarten spread a white tablecloth on the long table. She showed Sarah where the pewter spoons were kept in a polished wooden box. When the table was set with blue and white plates it looked very pretty. Sarah ran outside and picked a bunch of daisies from a patch beside the front stoop. Vrouw Maarten put the flowers in a bowl in the middle of the table.

Timothy and Heer Maarten had gone to the barn. When supper was ready Vrouw Maarten sent Rachel to call them. Timothy came running out of a stall in the corner.

“Guess what, Sarah. I milked a cow! I really did. It’s quite a trick.”

Heer Maarten came out of the stall after Timothy. He was carrying two pails of foaming milk. “Your brother’s very quick to learn,” he said.

The milk was stored in a little wooden shed by the spring at the back of the house. Before Timothy came into the house Heer Maarten asked him to take off his sneakers. They were dirty from the barn. Heer Maarten slipped out of the wooden shoes he was wearing. He left them with Timothy’s sneakers on the stoop.

Heer Maarten put on the soft leather shoes he had left just inside the door of the house. Vrouw Maarten handed Timothy a pair of scuffed slippers. “They belonged to my son when he was a boy,” she said.

There was a pitcher of water and a basin on a stand in the back room. Beside it was a towel and a bar of brown soap. Heer Maarten poured some water into the basin. He handed Timothy the soap. The two of them washed their hands.

Sarah had noticed another pair of wooden shoes on the stoop. “Do you always change your shoes when you come into the house?” she asked Vrouw Maarten.

“Yes. It helps keep the house clean,” Vrouw Maarten said.

Sarah looked down at her sneakers. “I don’t know whether these should be indoor shoes or outdoor shoes.”

Vrouw Maarten smiled. “We’ll decide tomorrow. Now sit down at the table.”

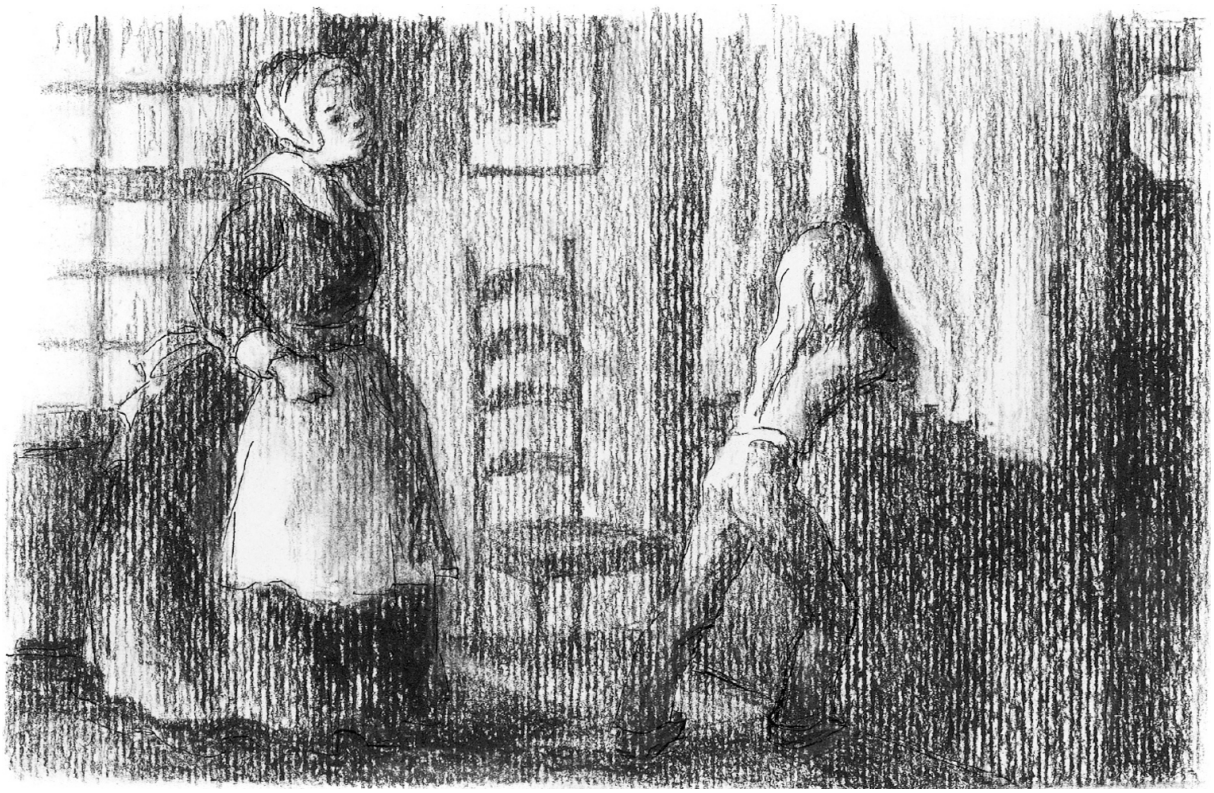
There was salted beef, sausages, pickled pork, cabbage, beans, corn on the cob, and big loaves of crusty bread with sweet butter. Sarah was sure she had never eaten so much in her life. She could hardly cram down the raspberries and thick yellow cream.

After supper Heer Maarten and Timothy went to put the horse into the barn for the night. Sarah helped Vrouw Maarten clear the table and wash the dishes.

When all the blue and white dishes were back on the sideboard, Vrouw Maarten walked over to the bed built into the cupboard in the corner of the room. “You can sleep here, Sarah.”

Sarah peeked behind the curtain. The bed was a high shelf with a featherbed and goosedown pillows on it.

Vrouw Maarten pulled a low trundle bed from under the shelf. “This is what my son used to sleep on,” she said. “I hope Timothy will be comfortable in it.”



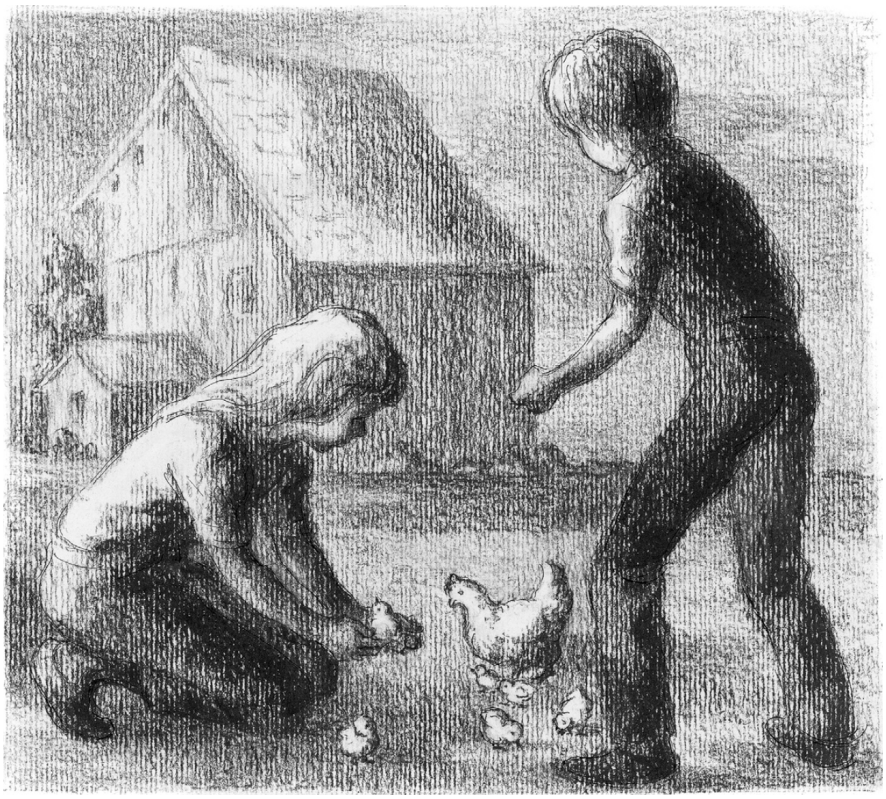
There were clothes of all sizes folded away in a big wooden chest in the back room.

“These were worn by my son,” Vrouw Maarten told Sarah. “I’m saving them in case I should have grandchildren.” She smiled. “My son was married last year. He has a farm in Flatbush.”

“Flatbush!” Sarah said. “That’s not far from where Tim and I live. I mean from where we will live.” She stopped. “I’m not sure what I mean.”

Vrouw Maarten changed the subject. “This is what I was looking for.” She held up two linen nightshirts. “I’m sorry I don’t have a nightgown that will fit you, dear. I never had a daughter. But you seem to be used to dressing like a boy.”

Sarah and Vrouw Maarten went outside. Timothy ran out from behind the barn. “Come and see the baby chicks, Sarah.”



After Sarah had looked at the chicks, she and Timothy sat on the front stoop of the house with Heer and Vrouw Maarten. The birds twittered in the summer twilight. It began to get dark. There were fireflies flashing in the peach trees around the house. Heer Maarten stood up. “Time for bed,” he said.

Sarah thought Timothy would object to wearing a nightshirt. But he thought it was funny. “And it’s cooler than pajamas,” he said. He jumped into the trundle bed and was asleep almost as soon as his head hit the pillow.

For a long time after the candle was out Sarah lay awake in the cupboard bed. She wondered if her mother was worried about her. Then she remembered that in all the stories she had read about people going back into the past, time had stood still until they got back.

“If that’s the way it is,” Sarah said to herself, “it’s not even time for supper at home.” She closed her eyes and fell asleep.

Soon after breakfast next morning a farmer drove his horse and wagon down the dirt road to the gray clapboard house. Sarah and Timothy helped Heer Maarten and the farmer unload four sacks of corn from the wagon. The men carried the sacks to the millhouse.

Vrouw Maarten took Timothy and Sarah to see how the corn was ground. Neither of them had seen anything like the big round millstones. They stood and watched while Heer Maarten poured the kernels of corn through a hole in the upper stone.

“The grinding will take a while, children,” Vrouw Maarten said. “Why don’t you go and dig clams?” She gave them a round wicker basket and two long-handled spades. Then she walked back to the house.

Timothy and Sarah left the mill and walked across the beach. The surf slapped against the shore. High overhead in the blue sky sea gulls swooped and screamed. Now and then a gull dived down to grab a fish from the water.

Sarah and Timothy dug and dug in the white sand. They made a big hole in the middle of the beach. But they didn’t find any clams.

“Let’s build a sand castle, Sarah.” Timothy took off his sneakers and rolled up the legs of his jeans.

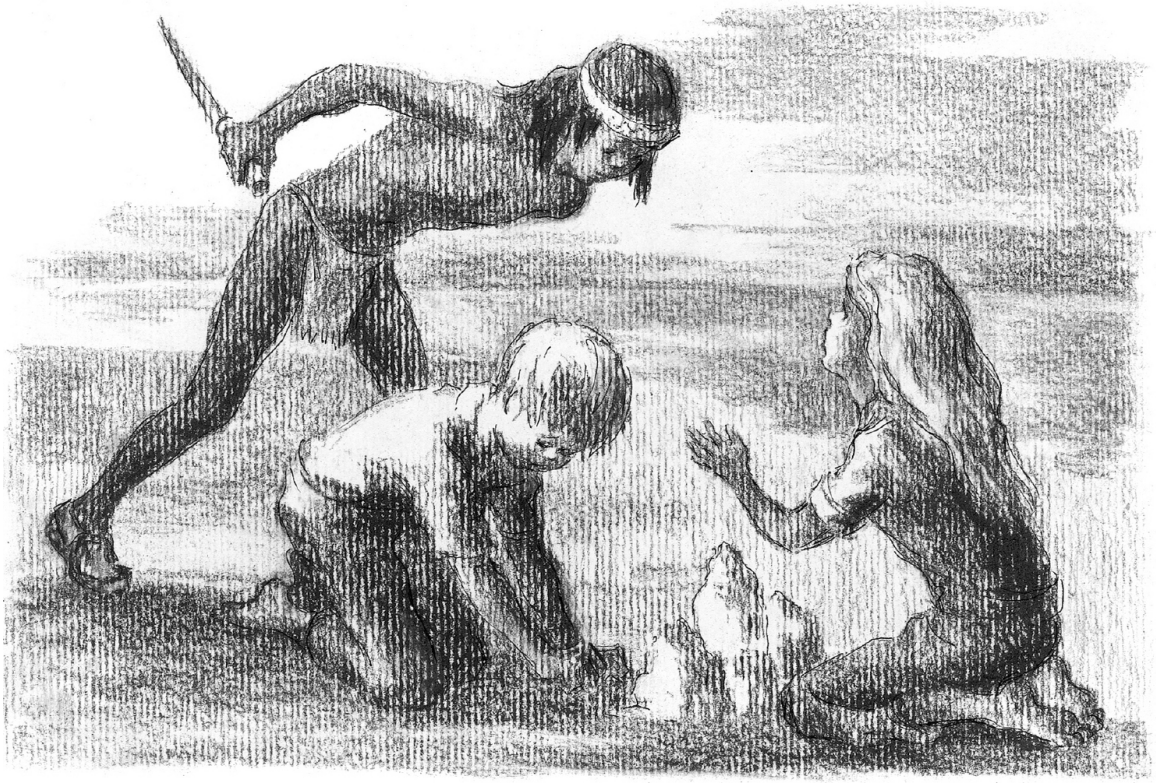
Sarah slipped out of her sneakers, too. The warm sand felt good between her toes. She set to work to pile the sand into towers.

Timothy began to dig a moat. “I’m getting water,” he said after a while. “Oh, rats. Now the sides are caving in.”

Sarah looked up from the pointed turret she was trying to make. Suddenly a cold chill ran down her back.

Someone was leaning over Timothy—someone with straight black hair held in place by a strip of beaded leather. Except for a small leather apron and moccasins, he was naked.

It was an Indian. And he was holding a long knife!



Sarah felt as if she were frozen. She couldn’t move or speak. Then the Indian stood up straight and looked at her. Now Sarah saw that he wasn’t much taller than she was. He was only a boy.

“I never saw anyone dig for clams that way,” the Indian boy said. “I don’t think you’ll get any.”

Timothy looked up. He was so surprised that he dropped his spade. “Who are you?”

“I like to call myself Beaver,” the young Indian said.

“I’m Tim. This is my sister, Sarah.” Timothy stood up.

“Beaver,” Sarah said, “will you show us how to dig clams?”

The Indian smiled. He picked up a spade and walked across to where the waves were lapping the edge of the beach. There he pointed to the wet sand. Sarah saw a little spurt of water. Beaver dug the spade into the place where the water had spurted. Up came a clam. It fell off the spade. Timothy made a dive for it. But the clam dug its way down into the sand before he could catch it.

Sarah ran to get the wicker basket. Beaver was already digging up another clam. As soon as the Indian pulled up his spade, Sarah shoved the basket under it. A fat clam fell into the basket.

Timothy began to dig with the other spade. Sarah was kept busy moving the basket from one to the other. If she wasn’t quick the clam would escape. They lost more than half the clams they dug up. But there were so many in the sand at the water’s edge that soon the basket was half full.

“It’s my turn to dig, Tim,” Sarah said. She handed Timothy the basket and reached for his spade.

The Indian laughed. “My people taught your people how to dig clams a long time ago. But you act as if you’ve never done it before.”

Sarah spotted a little geyser. She dug her spade into the sand and came up with a clam. Timothy held the basket ready. Sarah tossed in the clam. Beaver stopped digging and watched her. When the basket was almost full, the Indian went to a pool left by the tide on the beach. He fished out a tangle of wet seaweed and crammed it into the basket with the clams.

“This will help keep the clams fresh,” Beaver said. He put the lid on the basket and helped Sarah and Timothy drag it into the shade beside the millhouse.

“Whew! It’s hot!” Timothy wiped the sweat from his forehead with the back of his hand. “I wish we could go swimming.”

Beaver stared at him. “Your people never go into the water,” he said.

“That’s what you think.” Timothy pulled off his shirt and wiggled out of his jeans. He waded into the surf, wearing only his undershorts.

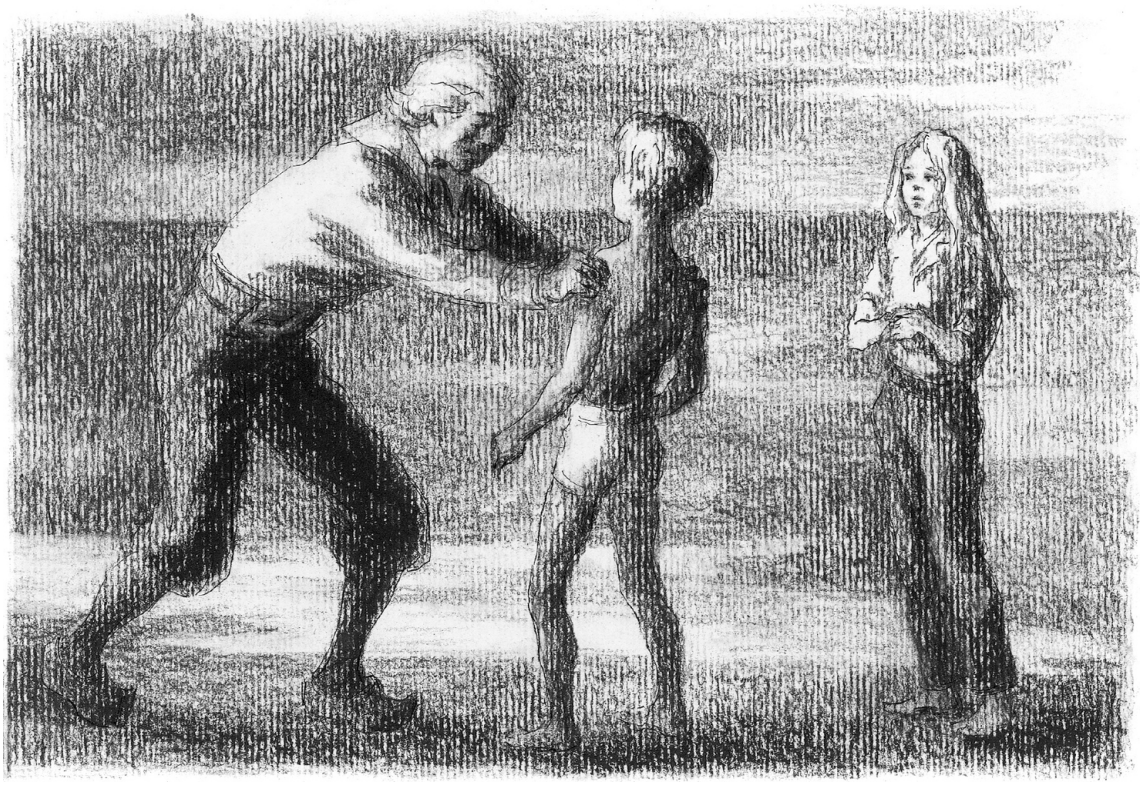
Sarah watched her brother splashing in the cool water. She wanted to join him. But she didn’t like the idea of having to go around in wet underwear.

“Do you like to swim, Beaver?” she asked.

There was no answer.

Sarah turned to look for the Indian. She couldn’t see him anywhere.

Just then she heard a shout. Heer Maarten came running across the beach toward them. He was very excited. “Tim,” he called. “Come out of that water this minute!”



Heer Maarten was sure that going into the ocean was likely to give Tim a fever. Timothy and Sarah tried to explain that they often went swimming and it never did them any harm. But Heer Maarten wouldn’t listen.

Timothy’s wet undershorts were spread on a beach plum bush to dry. He put his jeans and shirt and sneakers back on.

Vrouw Maarten invited the farmer to stay for lunch. It was all ready in the house. They all went in and sat down. The miller’s hair and eyelashes were dusty with flour.

“Did you find many clams?” he asked the children.

“Not at first,” Sarah told him. “But then someone came along who showed us how to dig them.”

“Oh, didn’t you know how?” the farmer said. “I thought everybody did.”

“The children come from over near Flatbush,” Heer Maarten explained. “It’s all forests over there, you know.” He patted Sarah’s hand to tell her to be quiet.

“Who showed you how to dig the clams?” the farmer asked. “There’s not another house for miles.”

“An Indian boy,” Timothy said.

“Oh.” Heer Maarten thought for a minute. “There aren’t any Indians living around here nowadays,” he said. “But some of them still come to get shells. Years ago they were always down at the shell banks making wampum.”

“What’s that?” Timothy asked.

“Dummy!” Sarah said. “That’s Indian money.”

“It’s little purple and white beads made from shells,” Heer Maarten said.

Vrouw Maarten interrupted. “We’d better hurry and finish eating. The tide is coming in.”

Everybody stopped talking and rushed to finish lunch. Sarah wanted to help clean up after the meal.

“We’ll do it later, Sarah,” Vrouw Maarten said. “There isn’t time now.”

The farmer and Heer Maarten carried the bags of cornmeal from the mill to the wagon.

The sea was much higher on the beach now. It was crawling in a circle around the sand dunes.

Sarah went to take Timothy’s undershorts off the beach plum bush.

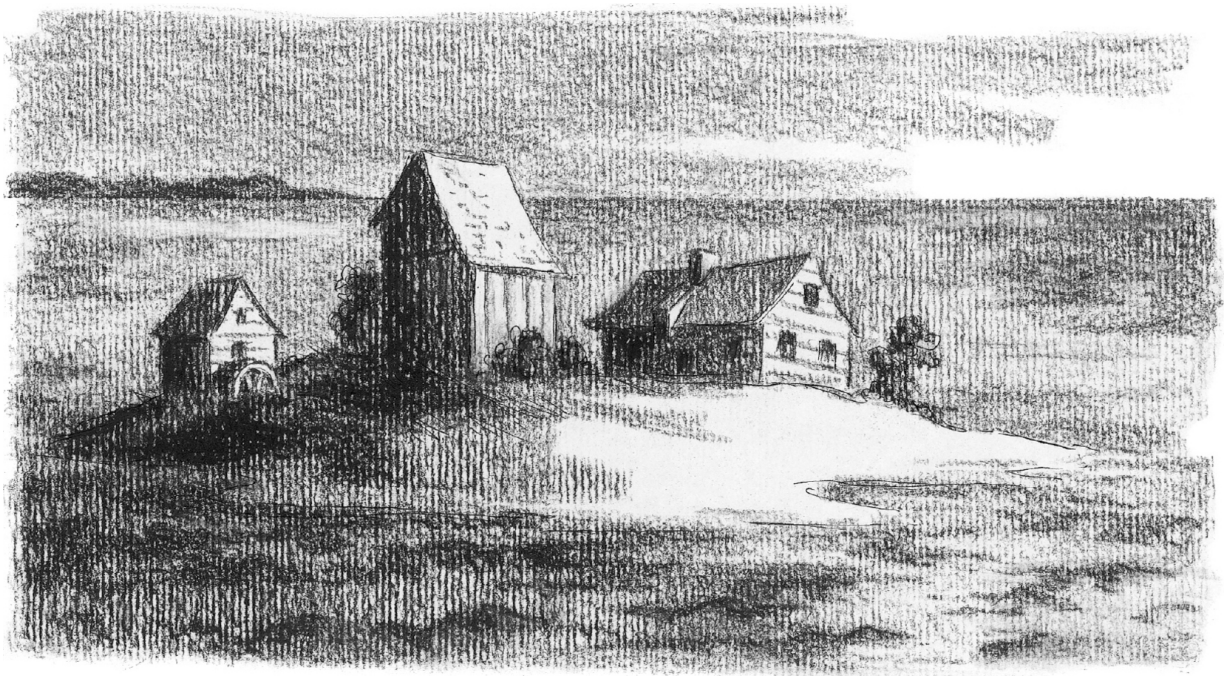
The miller and his wife stood beside the dirt road and waved to the farmer as he drove away.

“Why did he have to leave in such a hurry?” Timothy asked.

Heer Maarten pointed down the road that led across the salt marsh. “Look.”

Timothy and Sarah saw that the sea was washing across the road. Now that the tide was in, the house and the mill were completely surrounded by water.

They were on an island.



10

By the end of the week Sarah and Timothy felt as if they had never lived anywhere but in the gray clapboard house on Mill Island. There were lots of chores to be done. Timothy took the cow to the pasture in the morning and went to get her before supper. He pulled weeds in the cabbage patch and carried water from the spring to the house. Sarah learned to make butter and cheese. She sprinkled clean sand on the wide planks of the floor and swept it into patterns with a broom made of twigs.

At breakfast on Sunday morning Heer Maarten told the children, “There’s no service at our church here in New Amersfoord this week. I thought we might drive over to Flatbush to see Hans and his wife.”

Vrouw Maarten looked very happy. “Hans is our son,” she said. She looked at Sarah. “Those clothes need washing. Why don’t you wear the dress I made for you?”

Sarah took off her shirt and jeans. She poured water into the basin on the wash-stand and scrubbed herself all over. Vrouw Maarten gave her white linen underclothes to wear. Then Sarah put on the long blue dress Vrouw Maarten had made from one of her own.

Vrouw Maarten brushed Sarah’s hair and made two neat braids. “You look like a different girl,” she said.

Timothy changed into a long-sleeved shirt and baggy knee breeches that had been carefully patched. The clothes felt strange. But they were fresh and clean.

Both Sarah and Tim wore wooden shoes. They had been wearing them for a week now and were getting used to them. Vrouw Maarten had scrubbed their sneakers clean. She said they made very good house shoes.

When the tide was out, Heer Maarten hitched up the horse and wagon. His wife climbed up on the seat beside him. Sarah and Timothy sat in the back.

They drove across the salt marsh and then past fields of long grass. A few miles down the road they came to a little wooden church.

“The minister will come from Flatbush to preach here next Sunday afternoon,” Vrouw Maarten told the children.

For a long way the ground was flat and without trees. Now and then they passed a farm house. Stone wails bordered the fields, and a grassy path ran along each side of the road.

After a while the road began to wind through a wood. It was cooler here. Sarah was glad. She was not used to wearing so many clothes in the summertime.

The road was hardly more than a narrow lane here in the woods. Low tree branches brushed against the wagon. The gray horse had trouble pulling it.

“Tim and I can walk,” Sarah said. “Then the horse could go faster.”

The children climbed down from the wagon. They raced ahead down the lane.

“Sarah, look what we have here.” Tim turned off the lane into a little sunny glade. The ground was covered with low thorny bushes. They were loaded with ripe blackberries.

Sarah was following her brother. She picked a juicy berry and popped it into her mouth. “M-m-m. Let’s pick some for a surprise for Vrouw Maarten.”

“What will we carry them in?” Timothy asked.

Sarah stopped to think. If she held up the front of her dress, she could put them in that. But the berries might stain the dress.

“I’ve got an idea,” Timothy said. “What about putting the berries in our wooden shoes?”

The two children stared at the berries and wondered what to do. Suddenly Sarah heard a low growl. She looked up.

On the other side of the glade was a large bear. He began to walk toward them through the thorny bushes.

11

Sarah grabbed Timothy’s hand. She stepped backward toward the road.

The bear began to move faster.

Timothy pulled his hand away. “Run!” He bent down, took off a wooden shoe, and threw it at the bear’s head. For a minute the bear was stunned. Timothy pitched his other shoe and then ran after Sarah in his stocking feet.

Sarah reached the dirt road. She too slipped out of her wooden shoes. It was easier to run without them. Sarah raced across the road into the woods on the other side. Timothy was right behind her. The bear stopped in the middle of the road to sniff Sarah’s shoes.

Timothy and Sarah ran along a narrow deer trail. They didn’t stop to think where they were going. All they wanted was to get away from the bear.

Sarah held up her long dress to keep from tripping over it. She wished she was wearing her blue jeans.

The trail led to a rocky stream. Sarah bent down to pull off her socks. She lifted her skirt higher and waded into the water. “This will throw the bear off the scent,” she told her brother. “I read it in a book.”

Timothy looked at her with admiration. He too took off his socks and stepped into the stream. “What’ll I do with my socks, Sarah?”

Sarah held out her hand. “Give them to me.”

Timothy handed Sarah his socks. She tied all four socks end to end and then looped them around her waist. The socks had been knitted by Vrouw Maarten. Sarah knew she had better take care of them. But they were much too hot to wear on a day like this.

The cool water of the stream felt good to their bare feet. They sloshed along for a long time without speaking.

There were bright red flowers growing along the edge of the stream. Thick oak and hickory trees grew close together on each side of the water. It was dark in the woods, but a little sunlight came through the leaves and glittered on the stream.

The ground was hilly now. The stream wound between steep banks. Then it grew wider and deeper. Sarah stopped walking when the water reached above her knees. She climbed up the bank and sat down on a rock. “We must have lost the bear by now,” she said.

Timothy scrambled up beside her. “I think we’ve lost ourselves, too, Sarah.”

12

“Caw, caw, caw.” A large black crow flapped over their heads.

Timothy and Sarah sat very still on the rock above the stream. They watched a deer with two little spotted fawns come down to take a drink. A breeze rustled the leaves of the giant oak that leaned over the water.

At last Timothy spoke. “What are we going to do, Sarah?”

Sarah had been thinking. “There’s not much use going back up the stream,” she said. “We might run into the bear again. I think we ought to keep going until we come to a farm house.”

Timothy slid down the bank to the water. He made a cup of his hands and drank from them. Sarah wondered if she ought to stop him. Her mother had told her never to drink from a stream. But there was no other water here. Sarah was thirsty, too. She went down to get a drink. The water tasted better than any she had ever had.

They walked along the bank. When they came to a patch of blackberries, they sat down among the brambles and ate. There was no longer any question of how to carry the berries. Timothy rubbed his stomach. “Much better than a wooden shoe,” he said.

Sarah was quiet. She was wondering what Heer and Vrouw Maarten would think when they found her wooden shoes in the road. She wished she could let them know that she and Timothy were all right. But even if they found a farm house, there wouldn’t be a telephone.

She got to her feet. “Had enough berries, Tim? We’d better move on.”

The two children walked among the cardinal flowers, which grew along the muddy banks. Sarah heard a humming noise. A tiny green bird with a red throat was dipping his long beak into one of the blossoms.

There was no breeze now. The air in the woods was heavy and warm. Both Timothy and Sarah were uncomfortable wearing so many clothes.

They could see a wide patch of blue sky between the trees just ahead of them. Then the stream flowed into a little lake. A flock of mallard ducks with shiny green heads swam on the still water. Timothy pointed at them. “Those birds have the right idea!”

Sarah thought so, too. She untied the belt of socks from around her waist and pulled the long dress over her head. Then she slipped out of the bulky underwear. A fallen log lay beside the water. Sarah folded all her clothes and placed them on the log. She ran across the narrow beach and waded into the water.

Timothy had a great many buttons to undo. Sarah was already swimming on her back and spouting like a whale when he came splashing into the water after her.

13

The sun was lower in the sky when Timothy and Sarah finished their swim. They shook themselves like puppies to get the water off. In a few minutes they were dry enough to put their clothes back on.

When they were dressed, Sarah said, “We’ve come to the end of the stream. Now let’s follow the sun. We’ll be going west that way, not just round and round.”

They set off through the woods. Ahead of them was the tallest hill they had come to all day. “Why don’t we walk around it, Sarah?” Timothy asked.

Sarah wanted to climb the hill. When she was halfway up the steep slope it began to remind her of another hill—one she knew very well. She could hear Timothy slipping and sliding behind her.

Up and up they went. When they got to the top there was a little clearing. Sarah walked across it and looked out over the forests below.

Timothy came puffing over. “Hey, Sarah, this is just like Lookout Mountain in Prospect Park.”

Sarah nodded. “I think it is Lookout Mountain,” she said. “Someday our house will be out there where all those woods are.”

Timothy grabbed her arm. “There’s a house there now,” he said. “Look!”

Sarah looked where her brother was pointing. A thin line of smoke was rising out of the woods. It was a little to the right of the direction that they had been going. Sarah held up the skirt of her dress and started down the other side of the hill. She stubbed her toe on a rock. “Ow!”

“Sh-sh!” Timothy warned her. “Even if this is Prospect Park, the bears aren’t in cages.”

The two children walked as fast as they could after they came down from the high hill. The ground was rolling now. They came at last to a path that led through the woods. Here they could go much faster.

The path led to a small open field. Around it was a fence of wooden stakes. Tall green stalks of corn grew in the field.

“It’s a farm, Sarah,” Timothy said.

Sarah looked for the farmhouse. At first she didn’t see it. She walked around one side of the fence. Then, in the shadow of the trees at the other side of the field, she saw a small house, shaped like an upside-down bowl. It was covered with bark and dry grass.

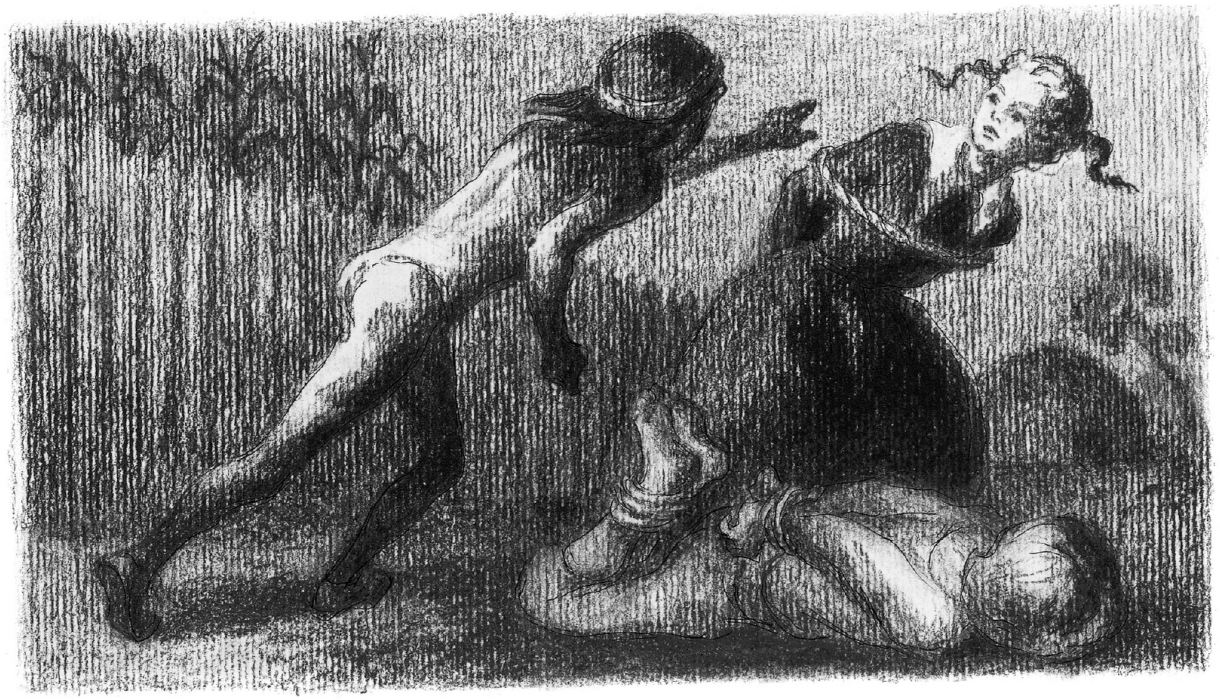
Sarah walked slowly toward the house.

Before she reached it a rope came down over her head. It was pulled tight around her chest. Sarah could hardly breathe. She managed to turn around. But she stumbled over something.

It was Timothy. He was lying facedown on the ground. His hands and feet were tied together.

Someone was trying to push Sarah down, too. She squirmed away. Then she saw who it was. “Beaver!”

14



The young Indian was reaching out to grab Sarah. At the sound of his name he stopped and stared into her face. “Sarah!” he said. He stepped back. “What are you doing in those clothes? I didn’t know you.”

Beaver wiped the sweat from his forehead.

Now Sarah saw that his hand was shaking. His face was streaked with dirt.

“Something’s wrong, Beaver,” Sarah said. “Take these ropes off Tim and me and tell us what’s the matter.”

Timothy rolled over onto his back. He watched as Beaver untied the rope from around Sarah’s chest. Then Timothy raised his feet in the air so the

Indian could untie them. Sarah bent over her brother and undid the ropes that bound his wrists together.

“I thought you were a friendly Indian,” Timothy said. “Even if you didn’t know it was Sarah and me, why would you do this?”

“If someone dragged away your family to make slaves of them, would you be friendly?” Beaver asked.

“Who would do a thing like that?” Sarah said.

Timothy got to his feet. “Who did it, Beaver?”

“The palefaces,” Beaver said. “They came rowing in from a big ship in the bay. I was behind a big rock cleaning a fish I had caught.

“The rest of my family was digging clams on the beach. My father went to greet the strangers. They pointed a gun at him. Then the palefaces put all my people in their boat and rowed away.”

Sarah was sure that people like Heer Maarten would never do anything like this. But the Indian told her, “You can’t trust palefaces.”

“Why do you trust us?” Sarah asked.

“I don’t know. You seem different from all the others,” Beaver said. “What are you doing here? It’s a long way from where I met you. And why are you in these clothes? I like your other ones better.”

“So do we,” Timothy told him.

“If you really want to know how we came here,” Sarah said, “we might as well tell you.”

The three children sat cross-legged in a circle under a hickory tree. Sarah told Beaver how she and Timothy had stepped back in time to live in the gray clapboard house with the miller and his wife. Beaver listened and nodded his head. He did not seem to find the story hard to believe.

Then Timothy told about the bear and how they were lost in the woods.

While they were talking a black cloud had come over the sun. Far off there was a rumble of thunder. A few raindrops splashed down. The sky grew darker and darker. Then a flash of lightning lit up the wood. *Crack!* It sounded as if a tree had crashed to the ground. The rain began to come down harder.

“Come.” Beaver ran toward the little house. The doorway was covered by a flap of bark. It was so low that Beaver had to stoop to go into the room inside. Timothy and Sarah came in after him.

15

Once the three children were inside the house, the door flapped shut behind them. Timothy straightened up and looked around. “This is neat, Beaver.”

The Indian boy smiled. “I helped my father build it,” he said.

A small fire burned in a pit in the center of the floor. Over it a hole had been left in the roof to serve as a chimney. By the flickering light Sarah and Timothy saw that the house had been made of a circle of young trees. They were tied together at the top with leather strings. The outside of the house was plastered with mud and covered with grass and bark.

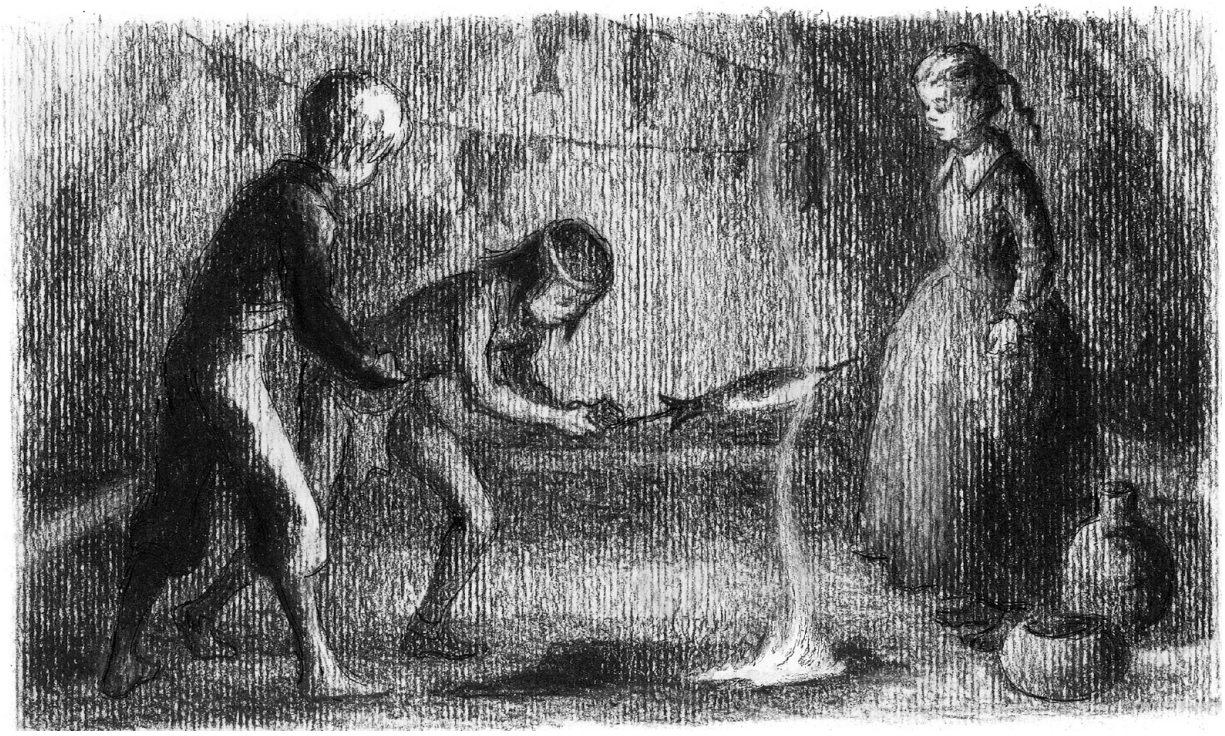
There were benches around the walls. Strings of fish and clams were drying on poles that stretched across the room. Beaver reached up and took down a large shad.

“I speared this one today,” he said. “I was cleaning it when I saw the men come from the ship.”

Sarah looked around for a frying pan. “How are you going to cook the fish?”

“Watch.” Beaver pushed a pointed stick through the shad and laid it across the top of the fire pit.

“We cook wienies that way,” Timothy said.



There was water in a large clay jug. Beaver dipped some into a clay pot and set it on the fire. He took a hard yellow squash out of a round basket.

“Let me help,” Sarah said.

Beaver handed her his knife. She set to work to scrape and cut up the squash.

The thunder still rumbled through the forest. They could hear the rain beating on the outside of the Indian house. But inside it was dry. While the squash was cooking in one pot, Beaver boiled cornmeal in another.

There were no spoons or forks or plates. Beaver cut hunks off the fish and gave them to Timothy and Sarah. They ate everything with their fingers. Sarah tried dipping pieces of fish into the boiled cornmeal. She liked both the fish and the cornmeal better that way.

At least there weren't any dishes to wash.

While she was eating, Sarah was thinking. "Beaver," she said, "what were the men like who kidnapped your family?"

"They had swords and guns," the Indian boy told her. "Some of them wore gold rings in their ears and had bright-colored cloths tied around their heads."

Timothy had seen men like this in the movies on television. "Pirates!" he said.

"Their ship is still anchored out in the channel," Beaver said. "I watched from the shore when they rowed away. Some of the men seem to be camped on an island."

"Could we swim to the island?" Sarah asked.

Beaver looked at her for a minute. Then he said, "I remember now. You're not afraid of the water like the other palefaces."

"They wouldn't expect anybody to swim to the island then," Timothy said.

"It's too far for that." Beaver stood up and wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. "But I have a canoe." He went to the door to look out. "It's stopped raining."

He came back and pulled a large basket out from under a bench.

"What's in there?" Timothy asked.

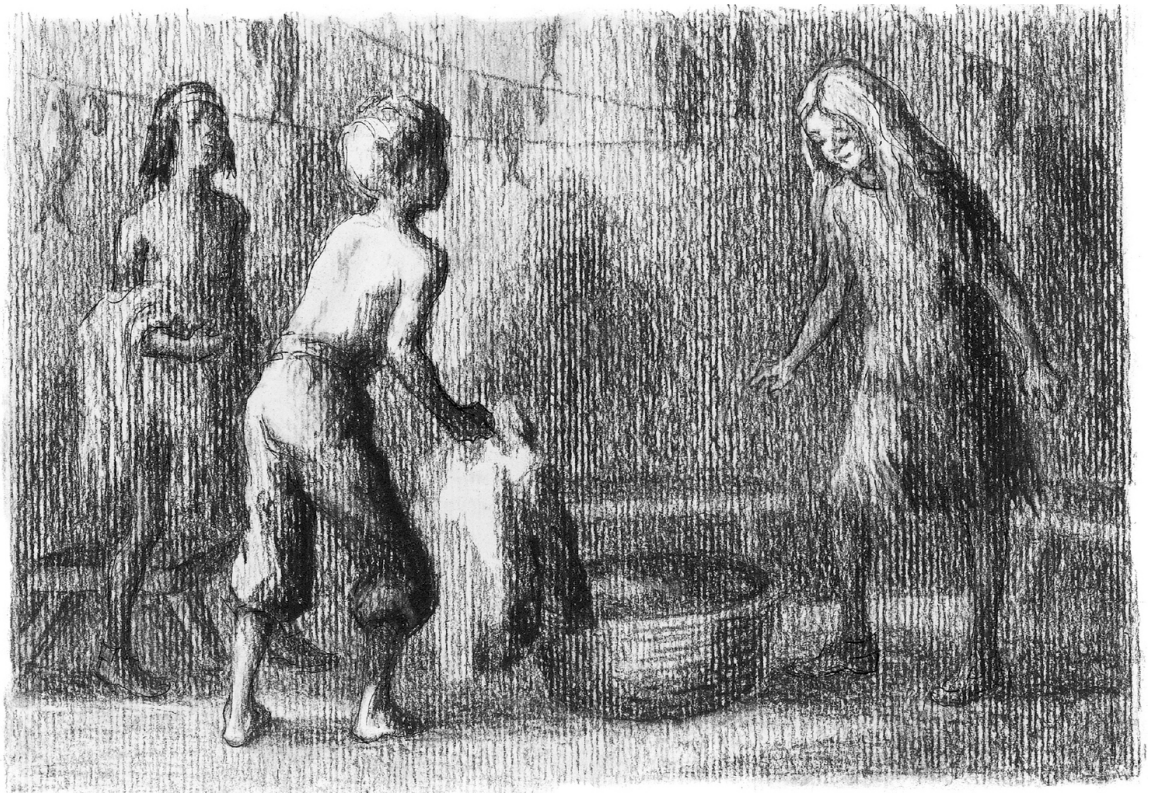
"Clothes." Beaver took the lid off the basket. "In winter I wear more than this."

Sarah and Timothy came over to look at the soft leather skirts and jackets and leggings. Some of them were trimmed with shells and porcupine quills.

"Oh," Sarah said, "they're beautiful!"

Beaver smiled. He smoothed a little fringed skirt with his hand. Then he handed it to Sarah. "This is easier to move in than that paleface skirt you're wearing. Put it on."

16



Timothy took off the stiff shirt and baggy knee breeches Vrouw Maarten had given him. Sarah slipped out of the long, full-skirted dress. They changed into the soft leather clothes that the Indians wore. Everything was more comfortable. The moccasins were the best of all. Sarah liked them almost as much as her sneakers.

It was not yet dark outside. Timothy and Sarah followed Beaver down the narrow trail through the woods.

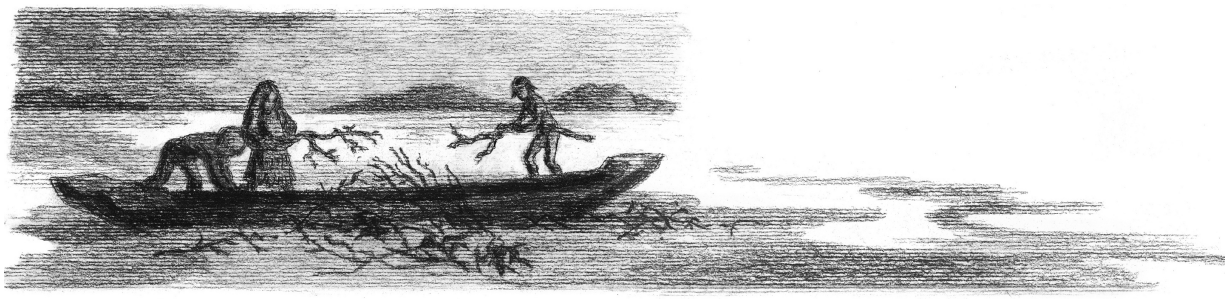
Rain dripped from the trees and rolled off the leather jackets. The children dodged low branches and marched over a ridge. Beaver stopped at the top of a hill. He pointed in the direction of the setting sun.

Timothy and Sarah looked down at the water of the Upper Bay. A tall ship was anchored out in the middle. It was near a small, tree-covered island. Gray smoke curled up into the aft from a fire burning there.

Overhead the clouds were pink. A wood thrush sang in the dusk. The bird had such a lovely trill that Sarah wanted to stand still and listen to it. But they had to get out of the woods before dark. She hurried after the others.

The hills dropped down to salt marshes near the shore. The children walked through long grass. They had to step on stones and fallen logs to keep out of the bog.

By the time they reached the water the sky was beginning to get dark. Beaver led them to a little inlet. A heap of driftwood and tangled grass was piled up near a sand dune. The Indian boy lifted a twisted piece of wood from the pile and brushed aside an armful of grass. “Help me.”



Sarah pulled off two branches from the pile. Timothy scraped away a mixture of vines and weeds. Under everything was a canoe made from a hollowed-out log. There were paddles that looked like scoops inside the canoe.

Together the three children pushed the heavy dugout across the sand. They slipped out of their moccasins and tossed them into the canoe. Then they shoved the canoe into the water and waded in after it.

When the canoe was in deep enough water to float without scraping the bottom, Timothy and Sarah climbed into it. Beaver gave the canoe a shove before he got in. He picked up a paddle and sent the canoe skimming out into the bay.

Timothy and Sarah paddled as hard as they could. They weren’t used to the funny scoops. The canoe was very low in the water. But it glided along at a good speed.

The sky was almost black now. Stars began to show between the moving clouds. Beaver paddled toward a bright spark in the darkness. It was the pirates’ campfire. Beaver used it as a beacon to guide them to the island.

17

For a long time the light from the campfire never seemed to come any closer. Sarah's arms were tired. She felt they had been paddling for ages. But she kept on lifting the paddle and pulling it through the dark water.

Then, far off, she heard music. Someone was strumming a guitar. The pirates were singing. As the children paddled, the sound came closer and closer.

The campfire was at one end of the island. After a while the children were close enough to see that the pirates were all gathered near the fire. Sarah couldn't see any Indians. Maybe the pirates had put them on their ship, Sarah thought. She looked over to where the tall-masted ship was outlined against the sky. A lantern swung near the stem.

Beaver turned the canoe. He paddled around to the end of the island farthest from the campfire. When the canoe was close to the shore, the Indian boy stepped into the shallow water. He signaled to Sarah and Timothy to get out of the canoe, too.

The children dragged the dugout onto the beach. Beaver reached into it and took out the moccasins. They put them on and walked silently around the island on the soft sand of the narrow beach.

They crept closer and closer to the pirates. Soon they could hear them laughing and talking. But the trees were in the way. The children couldn't see into the camp.

"Wait here for me," Sarah whispered to Beaver and Timothy. "I'll find out what's going on."

In the darkness she took off the leather skirt and jacket. She left them with the moccasins near a big rock on the beach and waded into the water.

Sarah swam around the island to where she could see the campfire. She kept under the water most of the time. Once in a while she stuck her head up for air and to take a look at the pirates. Beaver had told her palefaces never went into the water. The pirates would not expect anybody to be swimming in the bay. If they saw her, she hoped they'd think she was some sort of fish.

A long wooden boat was pulled up on the beach. About twenty rough-looking men were near the fire. The man with the guitar was sitting with his back against a tree. A number of the men were drinking out of mugs. Some were singing. Two were doing a funny dance together.

At first Sarah thought there were no Indians there. But then she saw them lying on the ground near the trees. There were four of them, and they were very still.

Two of the pirates walked over to the Indians. The shorter pirate pulled an Indian girl to her feet. The girl looked about twelve years old. Sarah saw that the girl's hands and feet were tied. She stood as well as she could in front of the pirate.

The music had died down. The guitar player was taking a drink. Sarah heard the pirates talking about the Indian girl.

"This one ought to turn out to be a housemaid, Tom."

"Maybe," Tom answered. "But Indians are not good servants. I don't think the captain will find a buyer for her, Jake."

"Why don't we just turn the whole lot of them free, then?" Jake asked.

"You'd better not let the captain hear you talk like that," Tom said. "He's a stubborn cuss. I'm glad he stayed aboard ship tonight."

The Indian girl stood in front of the two pirates. She didn't say anything. Jake looked at her again. "Sit down, lass," he said. "Sometimes I wish I'd never gone to sea." Jake walked over to a fallen log and sat down on it. He pulled a pipe out of his pocket and began to fill it with tobacco from a leather pouch at his waist.

Tom took his empty mug over to a keg of rum on the beach.

Sarah was beginning to feel cold in the water. She swam back the way she had come.

In the dark Sarah found her clothes where she had left them by the big rock. She put them on.

Timothy and Beaver had been waiting on the beach nearby. They came over.

“What’s up, Sarah?” Timothy whispered.

“There are four Indians tied up on the ground in the pirates’ camp,” Sarah said.

Beaver nodded. “That’s my family. Are they closer to the trees or to the water?”

“To the trees,” Sarah told him.

“Is anyone guarding them?” Beaver asked.

“I don’t think so,” Sarah said. “The pirates are all singing and dancing and drinking.”

Beaver thought for a minute. “Let’s get our canoe ready to leave.”

Sarah and Timothy helped Beaver push the dugout back into the water.

“Sarah, stay with the canoe and keep it from drifting away from the shore,” Beaver said. “Remember, whatever happens, *don’t leave the canoe!* Timothy, come with me.”

Sarah climbed into the canoe and picked up one of the scoops. The two boys went back along the beach toward the pirate camp. Sarah dug one end of the scoop down into the sand to act as an anchor.

She waited alone in the dark. The pirates had stopped singing. The only sound Sarah heard was the slapping of the water against the side of the canoe.

Suddenly there was a yell. It sounded like Timothy's voice. Sarah stood up in the canoe. She wanted to go and help. Then she remembered what Beaver had said. *"Don't leave the canoe!"* She sat down again and held on to the paddle. Her heart was banging inside her chest.

She saw the dark shadowy form of a man come out of the woods. He ran across the beach to where the canoe floated in the shallow water. Sarah held her breath.

In the distance she heard Tim's voice. He was yelling, "Help! Help!"

Sarah couldn’t stand it any longer. She got to her feet and was going to jump out of the canoe. But the man was too quick for her. He waded into the water and grabbed the paddle out of her hands. Then he pushed her down in the canoe.

Sarah tried to get up. But another man had climbed into the canoe. He grabbed Sarah’s arms to hold her down. She struggled. The canoe rocked.

“You stay still,” a deep voice commanded. Sarah saw two more figures running across the beach from the woods. They splashed into the water and scrambled into the dugout. One of them picked up another paddle from the bottom of the canoe.

Now Sarah heard crashing noises in the woods close by. A rough voice called, “Which way did they go?”

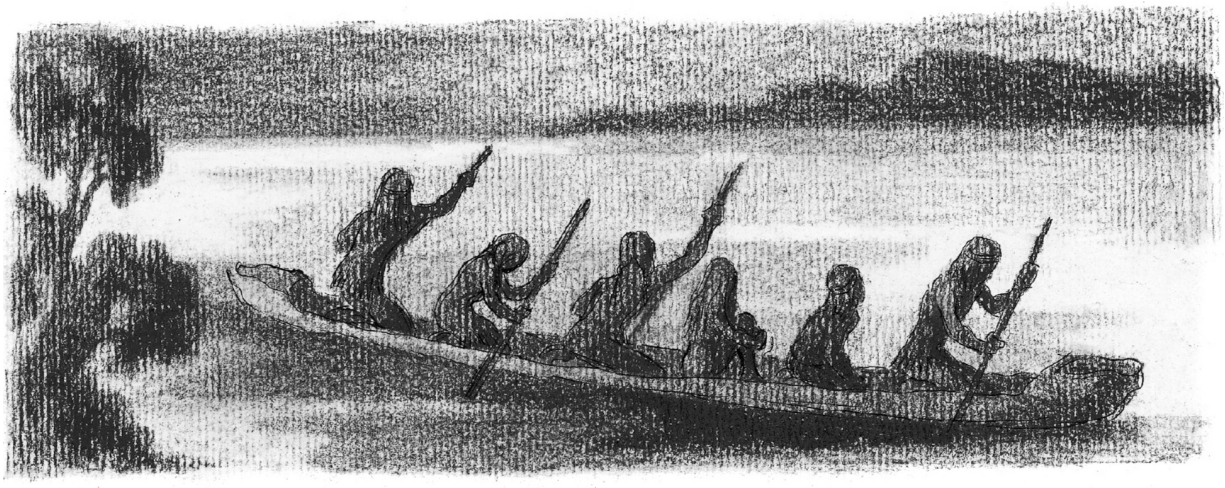
Farther off, Timothy was still yelling, “Help! Help! Help!”

One more figure crossed the beach and climbed into the canoe.

This was what the others in the canoe were waiting for. They started to paddle away from the shore. Sarah opened her mouth to scream. A hand was clapped across it.

“It’s all right, Sarah,” a low voice said. “It’s me. Beaver.”

19



The canoe glided into deeper water. The rough voices were closer now. The pirates came crashing out of the woods onto the beach. But the Indians' canoe slid around the island and headed for the place where the pirates had built their campfire.

Sarah was sitting up. Even though it was too dark for her to see much of the other people in the canoe, she knew now that they were Beaver's family.

But where was her brother?

The Indians made no sound as they paddled along. Sarah knew she shouldn't talk. Beaver crouched in front of her in the canoe. He was staring at the shore of the island. They came to where they could see the pirates' campsite. Beaver whispered in the ear of the tall Indian who paddled the front of the dugout. The Indian signaled to the man at the back. The canoe turned and headed toward the shore.

Sarah looked at the camp. It was almost empty. The pirate with the guitar still leaned against the tree. But he had stopped playing. He was looking into the shadowy woods. Jake was sitting on the fallen log, holding a pistol.

The canoe came close enough to the shore for the two pirates to see it in the light from the campfire. Jake stood up and aimed his pistol at the canoe. The Indian behind Sarah pushed her down. All the others ducked. The bullet whistled high over their heads.

Jake was loading his pistol. Sarah heard a splashing. Someone yelled, “Here I am!”

Timothy was swimming toward the canoe.

The Indians paddled toward Timothy. Before they reached him Jake fired again. The bullet again went high over their heads. Either he was a terrible shot or he didn’t really want to hit them, Sarah thought.

She reached over the side and pulled Timothy into the canoe. Beaver moved over to make space for him to sit down.

Tim was still wearing the leather clothes. The water was pouring off them. He was out of breath. “Boy, that was fun!” he said. “But I’d rather swim in a bathing suit.”

All the Indians were paddling. The canoe raced over the water. The clouds had blown away, and the sky was dusted with stars. The Indian at the back of the canoe kept looking up at them. “What were you screaming about?” Sarah asked Timothy.

“I was trying to give the pirates something to think about besides the Indians they had tied up,” Timothy said. “While they were listening to me, Beaver slipped over and cut the ropes.”

“You gave me something to think about, too,” Sarah told her brother. “I wanted to come and help you.”

“That would really have messed things up,” Timothy said.

“Why didn’t you tell me what you were going to do?” Sarah asked.

“I didn’t know. And Beaver told you not to leave the canoe,” Tim reminded her. He yawned. “Let’s not fight about it, Sarah. I’m tired.” He leaned against the side of the boat and closed his eyes.

Sarah was tired, too. She bent forward and rested her head on her knees. A moment later she was fast asleep.

20

“Wake up!” Someone was shaking Sarah.

She opened her eyes and looked into the face of the Indian girl.

Sarah sat up and rubbed her eyes. She felt stiff all over. Everyone else had left the canoe. It had been pulled up onto a beach. The Indian girl was standing beside the canoe and bending over Sarah.

“I am Beaver’s sister, Running Doe,” she said. “We let you sleep as long as we could. But the sky is gray in the east. Soon the sun will rise. We must go into the woods before anyone sees us.”

Sarah stood up. She climbed out of the canoe onto the sand. While she stretched, the Indians pushed the canoe higher on the beach. They began to pick up grass and sticks to cover it. Sarah ran to help.

“This is my father, Brave Eagle,” Beaver told her.

The tall Indian put down the piece of beach plum bush he had broken off. He shook Sarah’s hand. “Thank you for what you have done for us. I’m sorry if I frightened you last night. I had no time to explain.”

Beaver’s father propped the piece of beach plum bush against the canoe. He pushed the broken end of the bush into the sand. A few branches were crisscrossed over the dugout and draped with vines. In a few minutes the canoe was completely hidden.

Timothy had taken off the wet jacket and leggings. Like Beaver, he now wore only a little leather apron and moccasins. Beaver’s mother, Moonglow, rolled up the wet leather clothing so she could carry it on her back.

“It will be stiff when it dries,” the Indian woman told Sarah. “But I will stretch it with my hands until it is soft again.”

Before they left the beach the Indian boy introduced Sarah to his grandfather, who was known as Star Watcher. He was a slender old man with snow-white hair and bright, dark eyes.

Brave Eagle started down a faint trail that led through the woods. After him followed Beaver, Timothy, Moonglow, Running Doe, and Sarah. Star Watcher was last.

Sarah would have liked to talk to Beaver’s sister, who was right in front of her. But the Indians walked very fast and did not say a word. Every so often Timothy or Sarah stepped on a stick or crackled a dry leaf. The Indians never made a sound.

The birds were twittering in the trees. The sky overhead became brighter as the sun came up. They came to a ridge of hills. On the other side of it the trail joined another path. This led them back to the cornfield and the Indians’ house.

The fire in the pit was out. Star Watcher had to rub two sticks together to kindle a new fire.

Running Doe sat on the ground outside the house. She picked up a stone rod that thickened into a ball at one end. With this she began to pound dried corn in a stone bowl to make cornmeal. Sarah wanted to help, but the Indian girl just laughed at her. “I can work faster alone,” she said. “Tell me about yourself, Sarah. My brother said you come from another time. How can that be?”

21

Star Watcher had finished making the fire. He slipped quietly out of the house and stood beside Running Doe. Sarah had just started to tell how she and Timothy had stepped backward in time. The old Indian listened to the story. He watched Sarah's face all the while she was talking.

"I wish I knew how to get home again," Sarah finished. "I miss my mother and father." She was silent for a minute. "But I miss the Maartens, too. I'm sure they're worried about us."

Just then Timothy and Beaver came running over to them. Timothy was holding a bow and arrow. "Beaver has been teaching me to shoot. Watch."

Beaver pushed a stick into the ground. Timothy filled an arrow into his bowstring and aimed at it. *Zing!* The arrow flew past the stick to bury itself in a fence post.

"Let me try," Sarah said. Last year she had won first place in archery at summer camp.

Timothy ran to get the arrow. When he gave it to Sarah, she picked up the bow, pulled back the string, and took careful aim. The arrow winged through the air straight at the target. The stick split in half.

Beaver looked at his grandfather. "You see. She is not like the other palefaces."

"Yes," Star Watcher said. "I do see." He turned and went back into the house.

Running Doe was still pounding the corn. "Star Watcher is very wise," she told Sarah. "He is the medicine man of our tribe. All his life he has studied the healing magic of plants. Did you see the little bag he wears around his neck? That is a charm. Long ago Star Watcher was given this charm by the old medicine man who served before him."

Timothy sat down on the ground beside Running Doe. “Is a medicine man the same as a witch doctor?”

“He can do magic,” the Indian girl told him. “Last night Star Watcher steered our boat to safety. He drives away the evil spirits that make us sick. And he helps the corn to grow.”

At this moment Moonglow pushed back the flap of bark that served as a door to the Indians’ house. “Come and eat,” she said. “I have cooked enough for everybody.”

“Doesn’t she always cook enough for everybody?” Timothy asked.

“My people eat only when they are hungry,” Beaver explained. “We each cook our own food. But you are guests. And my mother knows that we all must be hungry.”

Moonglow had made cornbread. It tasted only half-baked to Sarah. But the Indians all seemed to enjoy it. Beaver ate three pieces.

All sorts of different things had been cooked together to make a sort of stew. Everyone sat around the pot and fished things out of it with a spoon. Then they ate with their fingers.

Sarah pulled out something that looked as if it might be a sparrow. She quickly put it back into the pot and took out something else.

Timothy held up a chunk of meat. “What’s this?”

“Skunk,” Beaver told him.

Sarah decided not to ask what she was eating.

22

After the meal Timothy went into the forest with Beaver and his father. They took their bows and arrows with them. Sarah spent the day helping Moonglow and Running Doe stretch deer hides until they were soft enough to make moccasins. Star Watcher went to gather herbs.

In the late afternoon Running Doe picked up a large clay jar. She started down a path that led to the woods.

"Where are you going?" Sarah called after her.

"To get water," the Indian girl said. "Do you want to come with me?"

Sarah followed her into the woods. The sun flickered through the leaves. A wood thrush was singing his little trill. A spring bubbled out of a hollow overhung by a large beech tree. Running Doe knelt down among the green ferns and filled her clay jar with water.

Then the two girls took off their moccasins and waded in the shallow stream that trickled from the spring. Cool mud oozed between their toes. A green frog darted out of their way.

Sarah wished they could stay in the woods. But Running Doe stepped out of the stream. “Come,” she said. “Tomorrow you have a long journey. Star Watcher is going to take you back to your paleface friends.”

Sarah put her moccasins on again. She and Running Doe took turns carrying the heavy jug of water. When they got back to the little house they found that Timothy, Brave Eagle, and Beaver had come home.

Timothy looked tired. “I’ve been trying to walk in the woods without making any noise,” he told Sarah. “I stepped on a dry stick when Beaver was aiming at a rabbit.”

“Did the rabbit get away?” Sarah asked.

“Yes. I was sort of glad he did. But Beaver wasn’t. He said he learned not to step on sticks before he was three years old. It made me feel dumb.”

“Then maybe you won’t mind that we’re going back to New Amersfoord tomorrow,” Sarah said.

“How?” Timothy wanted to know.

“Beaver’s grandfather knows the way. He’s going with us,” Sarah told him.

“You mean the witch doctor?” Timothy whispered. “He’s spooky.”

Sarah put her finger to her lips. She too thought there was something strange about the old Indian. But she didn’t want to scare Tim.

23

Timothy and Sarah slept that night in the little house with the Indians. Mats of woven grass were laid on the floor. Then they all lay down with their feet toward the fire.

Timothy fell asleep before Sarah did. She stayed awake listening to the strange sounds in the woods outside. An owl was hooting. The crickets were making a terrible racket. She heard what she thought must be a wolf howling.

Sarah rolled over onto her stomach and pretended she was in her own bed at home. The owl's hoots turned into the cuckooing of the clock in the downstairs hall. The crickets became the steady traffic noises coming from Church Avenue. And the wolf's howling was the wail of a siren on a police car going down Ocean Parkway.

Sarah’s eyes closed.

The next thing she knew, it was morning.

Star Watcher was already up. He was waiting for Timothy and Sarah. Moonglow had a bowl of boiled cornmeal ready for each of them.

The children changed into the clothes Vrouw Maarten had given them. Running Doe handed Sarah a comb and a mirror to use.

“I didn’t know Indians had things like this,” Sarah said.

“We trade furs to the palefaces for them,” Running Doe told her. She helped Sarah braid her hair.

When Moonglow saw that Sarah and Timothy had no shoes, she let them keep the moccasins Beaver had lent them.

Sarah hugged the Indian woman. “I know how hard you worked to make them.”

Moonglow smiled. “If you could stay with me, I would make you a beautiful dress,” she said. “But Star Watcher says you must go.”

The old Indian stood silently while the children said good-bye to Beaver and his family.

“Thank you for all you have done,” Brave Eagle said.

Star Watcher started off at a trot down the trail. He didn’t even look back to see if the children were following. They had to run to catch up with him.

In a few minutes both of them were out of breath. Timothy slowed down. He began to trot, just as the Indian was doing. Sarah held up the long skirt of her dress and tried to keep up with the other two.

Hour after hour they trotted along. They left the trail and went into the deep woods. Star Watcher kept looking at the sun to make sure he was going in the right direction. Sarah was tired. Her clothes felt heavy and hot. Timothy wished he was still wearing only the little leather apron.

When they came to a small rocky stream, Star Watcher turned around to look at the children. “Rest,” he said.

Sarah and Timothy sat down on the rocks at the edge of the water. The Indian gave each of them a hunk of half-cooked cornbread and a piece of dried meat. “Eat!”

They chewed the tough meat and choked down the bread. Sarah saw that Star Watcher was bending over the stream to drink. “He must know if the water is safe,” she whispered.

Timothy nodded. He cupped his hands and scooped up the cool water. “Great!”

Sarah had a drink, too. The water washed down the food she had eaten. She felt better. Star Watcher stood up. “We go on now,” he said.

The children followed him through the wood. The ground was getting flatter. They came to an open meadow. The Indian started across it at his

steady trot. Sarah and Timothy hurried after him.

The meadow was covered with rough grass. At one point they passed a tangle of raspberry bushes. Sarah wished that she could pick some of the berries. But Star Watcher was trotting even faster than before. Sarah held up her skirt and kept going.

The ground began to be marshy. The air smelled salty. Then, in the distance, Timothy and Sarah saw a big barn with holes under the eaves for the birds to fly in. There, by a dirt road near the sea, was a gray clapboard house.

24

Timothy and Sarah began to run. They raced past the cabbage patch and around the barn to the long front stoop of the house. Sarah banged on the door. Vrouw Maarten opened it.

For a minute she just looked at them. Then she stooped and hugged them both at the same time. Sarah threw her arms around her.

“Why are you crying?” Timothy asked.

Vrouw Maarten straightened up. She wiped her eyes with the corner of her apron. “We found a bear sitting beside your shoes in the middle of the

road," she said. "We looked for you all day. I thought something terrible had happened to you."

Vrouw Maarten stepped off the stoop into the road. "Come, children. We must tell Heer Maarten that you are home safe." She walked to the barn. Timothy and Sarah came after her. "Hendrick!" Vrouw Maarten called.

Heer Maarten had just finished milking the cow. He came out of the barn.

The old Indian followed him.

"Jannetje," Heer Maarten said, "look who's here!"

"Star Watcher!" Vrouw Maarten held out her hand. "It's good to see you."

"He brought back our children," Heer Maarten said. The miller put his arm around Timothy. He stroked Sarah's hair. "Let us all go into the house."

Sarah and Timothy left their dusty moccasins on the front stoop. Vrouw Maarten took their sneakers out of a chest where she had put them away. She looked at the clothes they were wearing. "Those need washing."

Sarah untied the sash of woolen socks from around her waist. Timothy was already unbuttoning his shirt. Vrouw Maarten had washed their blue jeans and polo shirts. She went to get them. Then she poured water into the basin on the wash-stand. She handed Sarah the soap. "See that Tim uses it, too," Vrouw Maarten said.

Star Watcher sat at the long table in the kitchen-living room with Heer Maarten. The Indian spoke in a low voice. Heer Maarten was smoking his long-stemmed pipe. When the children came out of the back room, the miller turned to look at them.

Sarah helped Vrouw Maarten get supper. Star Watcher was the honored guest. During the meal Sarah and Timothy told of their adventures. Heer Maarten was angry when he heard about the pirates. "I'll complain to the governor," he said.

When the last crisp cookie had been eaten, the Indian stood up. He looked at Vrouw Maarten. "You are my friends," he said. "And I know you are fond of these children. My people and I are fond of them, too. But they do not belong here."

Star Watcher walked to the fireplace. He took the leather bag from around his neck and opened it. From inside the bag he took a pinch of dried

herbs. He threw the herbs into the fire.

At once the room was filled with thick black smoke. There was a strange musky smell. Sarah's eyes were stinging. Timothy started to cough. He grabbed her hand and pulled her to the door.

The children stepped out into the clear air outside. They rubbed their eyes and looked around. Where was the road and the barn? Where was the sea?

Timothy blinked. "Sarah, we're back in the museum!"

Sarah walked slowly around the house. There were the cases of clothes and furniture. And there was the picture of the house as it used to be. She came back to the door and looked in.

The smoke was gone. No fire burned on the hearth. No dinner dishes remained on the table. And both the Maartens and Star Watcher had disappeared.

Sarah stepped inside the house. She started to walk into the room.

Smack! She banged into a glass wall.

Timothy came in and stood beside her. He tapped on the glass wall.

“We can’t get back in,” Sarah told him.

For a few minutes Timothy was quiet. Then he said, “I don’t want to look at the mummy after all, Sarah. Let’s go home.”

About the Author

Ruth Chew was born in Minneapolis and studied at the Corcoran College of Art and Design in Washington, DC.

Working as a fashion artist, she started writing stories about witches for the youngest of her five children. The first of these, *The Wednesday Witch*, was a big hit, and her new career was born. Ruth Chew went on to write twenty-nine tales of magic and fantasy that have enchanted generations of readers.

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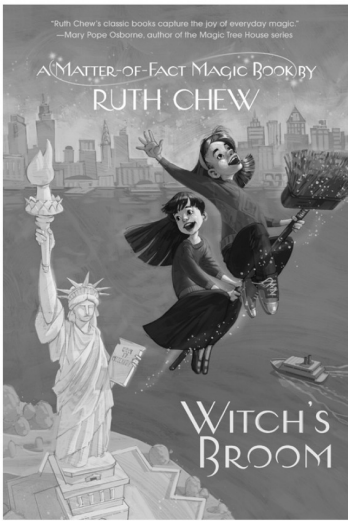
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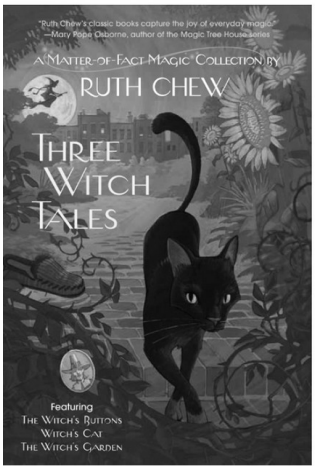
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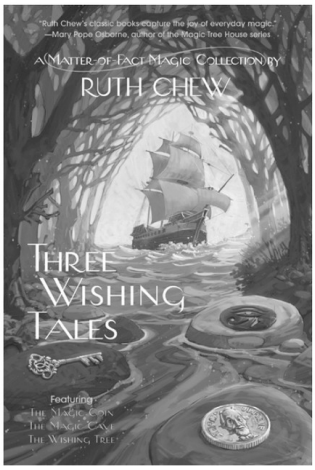
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